LION

ANNUAL

1956

HUDSON BAY

CANADA

U.S.A.

R. AMAZON

SOUTH AMERICA

Frontispiece

See Story on Page 44

THE SEA-BED TREASURE-SEEKERS

LION ANNUAL

1956

Issued from
THE FLEETWAY HOUSE, FARRINGDON STREET, LONDON, E.C.4

CONTENTS

PICTURE STORIES

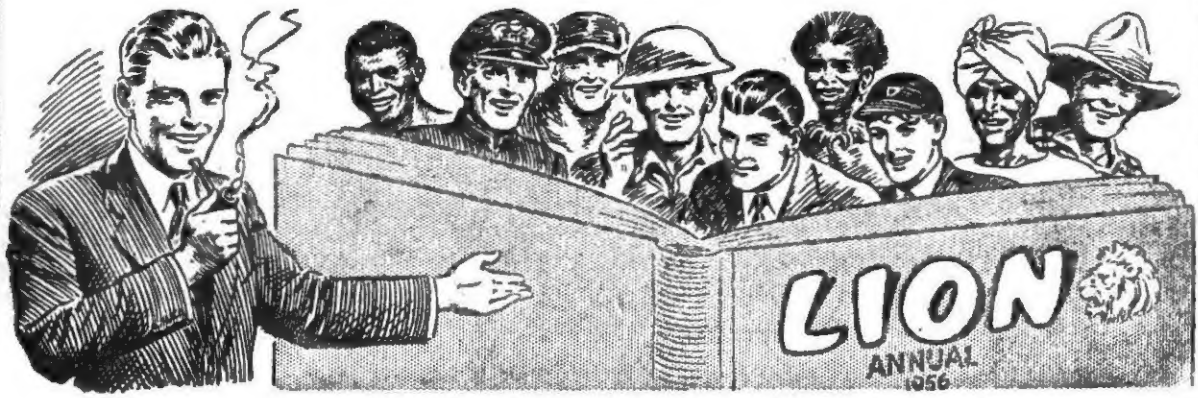
	Page
SANDY DEAN in—GUARDIAN OF THE SECRET CHIMP	3
THE JUNGLE JEEP ADVENTURERS	24
CAPTAIN CONDOR FIGHTS THE SPACE PIRATES	49
THE CASE OF THE CHINESE IDOL	68
TRAPPER KEN FOILS THE FUR THIEF	88
TONY, THE CIRCUS ACROBAT	105
MYSTERY HOUSE IN NO-MAN'S-LAND	126
SKYWAY POLICE FOR THE DESERT SHEIK	146

ARTICLES

WORLD-WIDE QUIZ	16
PICTURE PARADE OF FACTS FROM NEAR AND FAR	42
WONDERS OF OUTER SPACE	62
THEY'RE INVENTORS' BRAIN-WAVES	87
WHEN THE ROMANS WENT CHARIOT RACING	124

WRITTEN STORIES

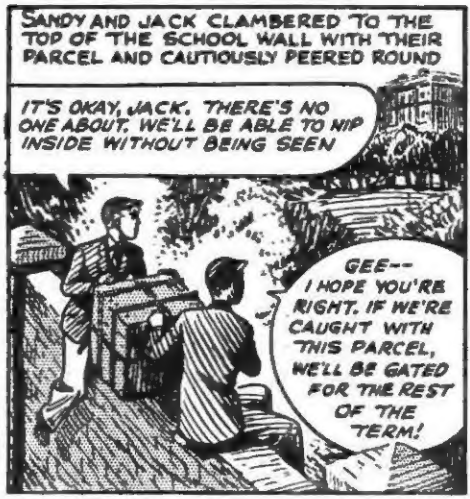
	Page
THE PYGMIES WHO WANTED TO BECOME GIANTS	11
TAMING A TROUBLE-MAKER	18
SPOOK-HUNTER GERRY GETS HIS GHOST	32
THE UNMASKING OF THE TIMBER-CAMP TRAITOR	37
THE SEA-BED TREASURE-SEEKERS	44
MARCUS, THE ROMAN WRESTLER	57
THE DOWNFALL OF SAMMY THE SNEAK	64
ROBBERY AT WOOLSHED CREEK	76
MIGHTY MABU SAVES THE HERD	82
SKINNY'S SMOKE BOMB	96
THE MAN WHO WRECKED A REVOLUTION	100
"RAJAH" ROUTS THE RAIL-ROAD WRECKERS	113
SHERIFF SPIKE—RACKET BUSTER	119
THE HAUNTED LAGOON	135
PHIDO, THE ELECTRONIC BLOODHOUND	141
THE T.V. THRILL-HUNTERS	154



SANDY DEAN IN — GUARDIAN of the SECRET CHIMP

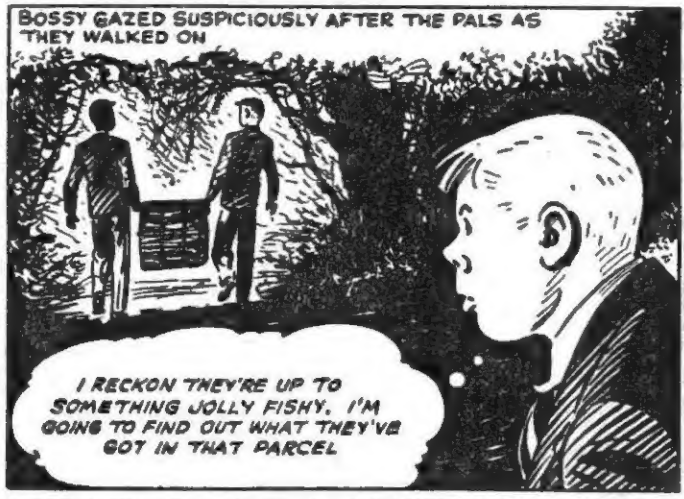
(By BARRY NELSON)

SANDY DEAN AND HIS PAL, JACK HARDY, WERE IN THE FOURTH FORM AT TOLLGATE SCHOOL. THEY WENT INTO THE TOWN ONE AFTERNOON ON A SECRET MISSION. WHEN THEY STARTED TO RETURN TO THE SCHOOL, THEY WERE CARRYING A LARGE, MYSTERIOUS PARCEL


SANDY AND JACK CLAMBERED TO THE TOP OF THE SCHOOL WALL WITH THEIR PARCEL AND CAUTIOUSLY PEERED ROUND
IT'S OKAY, JACK. THERE'S NO ONE ABOUT. WE'LL BE ABLE TO NIP INSIDE WITHOUT BEING SEEN
GEE-- I HOPE YOU'RE RIGHT. IF WE'RE CAUGHT WITH THIS PARCEL, WE'LL BE GATED FOR THE REST OF THE TERM!

THE PALS MADE THEIR WAY THROUGH THE TREES UNTIL--
GOSH — IT'S BOSSY BATES!
HUH! WHAT ARE YOU TWO UP TO — SNEAKING ALONG LIKE A COUPLE OF SPIES ?

BOSSY BATES WAS THE BULLY OF THE FOURTH, AND SANDY DIDN'T MEAN TO LET HIM INTO THEIR SECRET
YOU GO AND FRY EGGS. WHAT WE'RE DOING IS NOTHING TO DO WITH YOU
SCRAM, BOSSY-


BOSSY GAZED SUSPICIOUSLY AFTER THE PALS AS THEY WALKED ON
I RECKON THEY'RE UP TO SOMETHING JOLLY FISHY. I'M GOING TO FIND OUT WHAT THEY'VE GOT IN THAT PARCEL

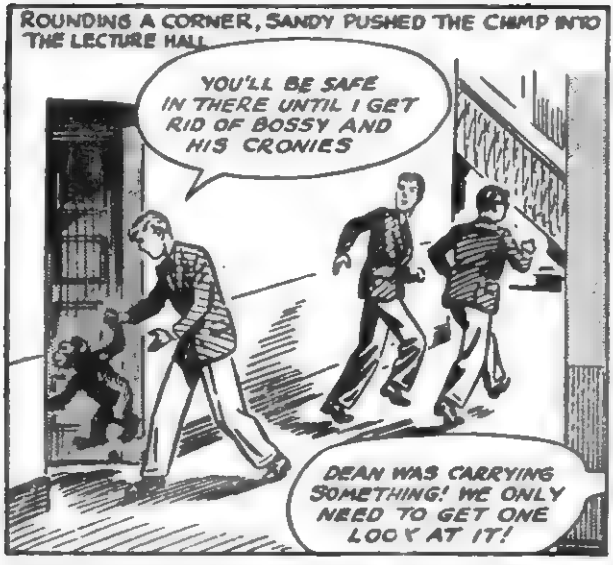
SANDY AND JACK HURRIED ALONG TO THEIR STUDY. THERE THEY JOINED THEIR PAL, OWL WATSON, WHO LOOKED UP AT THEM WITH SURPRISE
HELLO, HELLO! WHAT'S COOKING, CHAPS ?
STAND BY FOR A SHOCK, OWL!

WHAT ON EARTH'S THE IDEA, SANDY? YOU KNOW WE AREN'T ALLOWED TO KEEP PETS AT TOLLGATE
READ THIS LETTER AND YOU'LL SEE
CANN'S CIRCUS
Dear Sandy. Can you come down to the Circus at once and collect a chimpanzee from me? I want you to look after it for a short time. It's Most Important - and don't tell anyone but your closest friends. If you can-
AT THAT MOMENT, THE BELL FOR LESSONS BEGAN TO RING
WE'D BETTER GET WEAVING. WHAT ABOUT THE CHIMP, SANDY? YOU CAN'T LEAVE THE POOR LITTLE FELLOW COOPED UP IN THAT CAGE
NO -- I'LL PUT HIM ON A LEAD
THIS WILL ALLOW HIM TO STRETCH HIS LEGS A BIT
WE'LL PLACE THIS SCREEN IN FRONT OF HIM. THEN NOBODY WILL SEE HIM EVEN IF THEY OPEN THE DOOR AND LOOK INTO THE STUDY
HARDLY HAD THE SCREEN BEEN PUT INTO POSITION THAN BOSSY BATES STOPPED OUTSIDE THE STUDY
WHAT THE THUMP ARE THEY UP TO? I CAN'T SEE A THING
THAT FIXES IT, JACK. THERE'S NO NEED TO WORRY
BOSSY BOLTED WHEN HE HEARD SANDY AND CO. PREPARING TO COME OUT
THEY'VE GOT SOMETHING MIGHTY SPECIAL HIDDEN IN THERE -- AND I MEAN TO KNOW WHAT IT IS. I'LL THINK OF A SCHEME DURING LESSONS

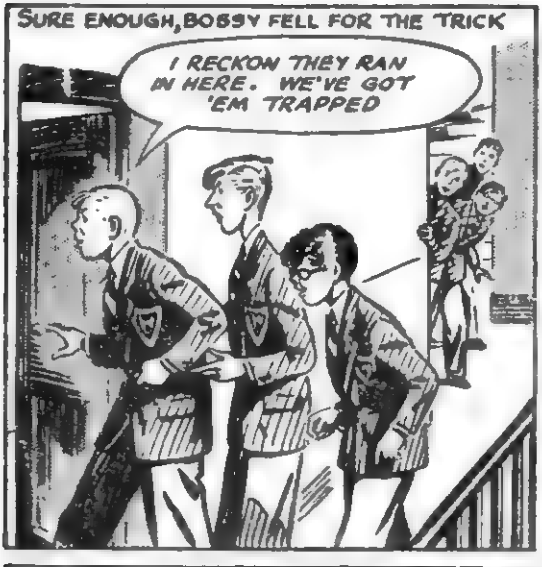
MR. TALLOW WAS TAKING THE FOURTH THAT AFTERNOON. HE LOOKED UP AS SANDY AND CO. ARRIVED
YOU BOYS ARE LATE - YOU WILL EACH TAKE TWENTY-FIVE LINES
OH, GOSH! THAT CHIMP HAS STARTED GETTING US INTO TROUBLE ALREADY
BOSSY BATES WAITED UNTIL NEARLY THE END OF THE LAST LESSON. THEN -
I'VE A BIT OF A COLD, SIR, AND I HAVEN'T A HANDKERCHIEF WITH ME. CAN I FETCH ONE FROM MY STUDY, SIR?
VERY WELL, BATES
BOSSY WENT DIRECT TO SANDY'S STUDY
NOW TO DISCOVER WHAT THOSE CHAPS WERE HIDING IN HERE. IF THEY'RE BREAKING THE RULES, I'LL REPORT 'EM TO OLD TALLOW
THE NEXT MOMENT, BOSSY GOT THE SHOCK OF HIS LIFE
HEY! WHAT ON EARTH -
CRASH!
YOW! STOPPIT! WHO THE -
THE CHAP INSIDE THERE MUST BE CRACKERS. I'M OFF BEFORE I GET LAID OUT!

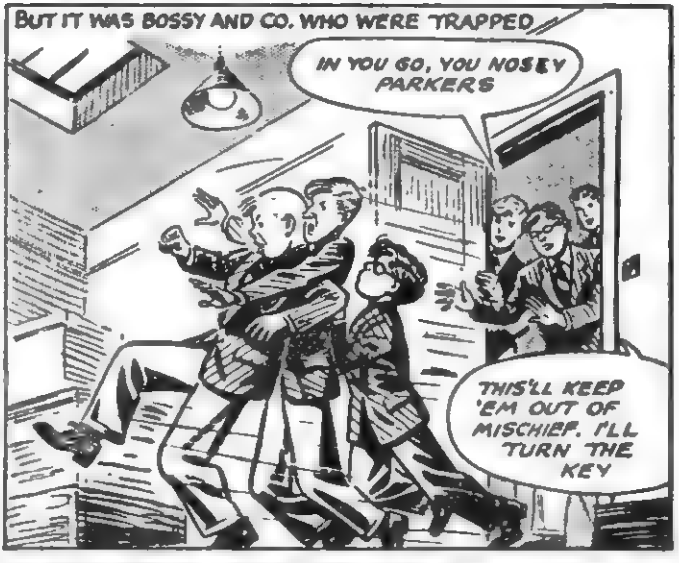
JUST WAIT UNTIL I TELL OLD TALLOW ABOUT THIS. HE'LL SOON SORT OUT WHOEVER IS IN THERE. THEN THE SPARKS'LL FLY!
THE INSTANT BOSSY ENTERED THE CLASSROOM, SANDY REALISED WHERE HE HAD BEEN
JACK! HE'S BEEN SNOOPING IN OUR STUDY, WE'D BETTER NIP ALONG IMMEDIATELY THE BELL RINGS
YOU'RE RIGHT, BY JINGO. AH--THERE GOES THE BELL NOW
THE PALS TORE UP TO THEIR STUDY--THEN HALTED IN DISMAY
CRIKEY! WHAT A MESS!
THE LITTLE BLIGHTER ESCAPED BY GNAWING THROUGH HIS LEAD
AND HE'S TRYING TO MAKE FOR THE ROOF. IF WE DON'T COLLAR HIM, HE'LL BE SEEN. COME ON - AFTER HIM!
BUT BEFORE THEY COULD GRAB THE CHIMP -
BATES HAS REPORTED A MOST AMAZING OCCURRENCE TO ME, DEAN. WHAT HAS BEEN HAPPENING IN THIS STUDY?
H-HAPPENING, SIR? WE'VE ONLY JUST ARRIVED
SOMEONE WAS HIDING IN HERE, SIR. HE BUNGED THINGS AT ME TO KEEP ME OUT
BUT WE WERE ALL IN THE CLASSROOM EXCEPT BATES, SIR
THIS IS MOST EXTRAORDINARY. I MUST NOW ATTEND A MASTERS' MEETING. THE MOMENT IT IS OVER, HOWEVER, I SHALL RETURN HERE FOR A FULL EXPLANATION

AS MR. TALLOW HURRIED AWAY, BOSSY TURNED TO THE PALS WITH A SNEER
YOU THINK YOU'VE GOT AWAY WITH IT. BUT I KNOW YOU'RE UP TO SOME TRICKY GAME-- AND WHEN I'VE FOUND OUT WHAT IT IS, I'LL SEE THAT YOU GET IT IN THE NECK
YOU'LL GET IT IN THE NECK NOW IF YOU HANG AROUND HERE. BUZZ OFF--YOU MAKE THE PLACE UNTIDY
ONCE BOSSY HAD GONE, SANDY LOOKED OUT OF THE WINDOW FOR THE CHIMP
HE'S IN THE PAINTERS' CRADLE. WE OUGHT TO BE ABLE TO REACH HIM FROM THE NEXT ROOM
SANDY RUSHED INTO THE ADJOINING STUDY AND MANAGED TO GRAB THE CHIMP. HE DIDN'T NOTICE THAT THE POT OF PAINT WAS FALLING
JUST IN TIME! IN ANOTHER SECOND HE WOULD HAVE BEEN SEEN BY BOSSY AND CO. THEY'RE DOWN BELOW NOW
THE PAINT-POT DROPPED BY THE CHIMP WENT HURTLING THROUGH THE AIR, AND-
YARROOP! WHO DID THAT? I'LL SPIFLICATE HIM!
IT MUST HAVE BEEN THAT ROTTER SANDY DEAN!
SANDY CARRIED THE CHIMP BACK TO HIS PALS, AND TOLD THEM WHAT HAD HAPPENED
BOSSY'S HOPPING MAD. HE'LL DO ANYTHING NOW TO DISCOVER WHAT WE'RE HIDING. AND IF HE SUCCEEDS AND REPORTS US, WE'LL BE RIGHT IN THE SOUP
PHEW! AND SO WILL THE OWNER OF THE CHIMP
THE BEST THING WE CAN DO IS TO HIDE THE CHIMP IN ONE OF THE BOOT-BOY'S CUPBOARDS
OWL'S SUGGESTION SEEMED A GOOD ONE--BUT THE PALS WERE TOO LATE
LOOK OUT! HERE ARE BOSSY AND CO.
THEY HAVEN'T SEEN THE CHIMP YET. LET'S BOLT FOR IT
HI! STOP, DEAN. I'VE A BONE TO PICK WITH YOU


ROUNDING A CORNER, SANDY PUSHED THE CHIMP INTO THE LECTURE HALL
YOU'LL BE SAFE IN THERE UNTIL I GET RID OF BOSSY AND HIS CRONIES
DEAN WAS CARRYING SOMETHING! WE ONLY NEED TO GET ONE LOOK AT IT!

THE PALS RACED UPSTAIRS, AND SANDY FLUNG OPEN THE DOOR OF THE FIRST ROOM ON THE LANDING
DON'T GO IN HERE, CHAPS. IT'S A TRAP FOR BOSSY AND CO.


SURE ENOUGH, BOSSY FELL FOR THE TRICK
I RECKON THEY RAN IN HERE. WE'VE GOT 'EM TRAPPED


BUT IT WAS BOSSY AND CO. WHO WERE TRAPPED
IN YOU GO, YOU NOSEY PARKERS
THIS'LL KEEP 'EM OUT OF MISCHIEF. I'LL TURN THE KEY

WITH BOSSY AND CO. LOCKED UP, THE THREE PALS RETURNED TO THE LECTURE HALL, INTO WHICH SANDY HAD PUSHED THE MONKEY. BUT WHEN SANDY OPENED THE DOOR--
GEE WHIZ! WE'VE JUMPED OUT OF THE FRYING PAN AND RIGHT INTO THE FIRE!

THE MASTERS MUST HAVE WALKED IN WHILE WE WERE UPSTAIRS. BUT WHAT'S HAPPENED TO THE CHIMP?
THERE HE IS--UP IN THE RAFTERS. IF HE ISN'T SPOTTED NOW, IT'LL BE A MIRACLE!

HALF A SEC. IF WE COULD GET THE MASTERS OUT OF THE HALL, WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO CAPTURE THE CHIMP... AH! AN IDEA! IN ONE OF THE GARDEN SHEDS THERE'S THE VERY THING!
SANDY FETCHED A LARGE SACK FROM THE SHED, AND WITHIN A FEW MINUTES WAS CLIMBING UP THE FIRE ESCAPE TO THE SCHOOL ROOF
NOW TO DRIVE THE MASTERS OUT OF THE LECTURE HALL
THIS CAN'T FAIL TO DO THE TRICK!
DOWN IN THE LECTURE HALL, SMOKE BEGAN TO POUR FROM THE CHIMNEY WHICH SANDY HAD BLOCKED WITH THE SACK. THE MASTERS WERE FURIOUS
I SHALL SPEAK MOST SEVERELY TO THE SWEEP. THAT CHIMNEY WAS SWEPT ONLY A FEW WEEKS AGO
I CAN'T BREATHE, SIR— THE SMOKE IS CHOKING ME!
WE CANNOT REMAIN HERE, GENTLEMEN. WE WILL ADJOURN TO MY STUDY
ATISHOO!
IT WAS THEN THAT SANDY RECEIVED A SHOCK
OH, CORKS! I CLEAN FORGOT THERE WAS A SKYLIGHT IN THE ROOM WHERE I LOCKED BOSSY AND CO. THEY'RE JUST COMING THROUGH IT!
BOSSY AND CO. DIDN'T SEE SANDY. THEY WENT SCURRYING DOWN THE FIRE-ESCAPE — UNTIL THE ANGRY VOICE OF THE HEADMASTER HALTED THEM
STOP! I KNOW WHAT YOU'VE DONE. YOU'VE DELIBERATELY BLOCKED UP THE CHIMNEY OF THE LECTURE HALL. SUCH DISGRACEFUL JAPES I WILL NOT TOLERATE!
JAPE, SIR? CHIMNEY? B-BUT—

I WILL LISTEN TO NO EXCUSES. YOU WILL GO TO THE DETENTION ROOM AND WAIT THERE UNTIL I HAVE TIME TO ATTEND TO YOU
THE MOMENT THE COAST WAS CLEAR, SANDY REMOVED THE SACK FROM THE CHIMNEY AND REJOINED HIS PALS. THEN THEY STOLE INTO THE LECTURE HALL WITH A LADDER
COME ON, OLD CHAP. YOU'VE CAUSED ENOUGH TROUBLE ALREADY!
THE CHIMP'S SWALLOWED SO MUCH SMOKE HE'S HALF ASLEEP!
SANDY MADE HIS WAY DOWN THE LADDER IN TRIUMPH UNTIL --
JEEPERS! HERE'S THE HEAD!
GOOD GRACIOUS! SANDY DEAN -- AND AN APE!
SURELY I MUST BE DREAMING! WHAT IS THE EXPLANATION OF THIS INCREDIBLE CONDUCT? PETS ARE FORBIDDEN AT TOLLGATE, AND --
THE HEADMASTER BROKE OFF AS A STRANGER STRODE INTO THE ROOM
I'M BUCK FARROW, SIR, OF CANN'S CIRCUS. I PERSUADED SANDY TO MIND THE CHIMP FOR ME AND NOT TO LET ANYONE KNOW. IF ANY DAMAGE HAS BEEN CAUSED I SHALL BE ONLY TOO PLEASED TO PAY FOR IT
BUCK EXPLAINED THAT THE CHIMP WAS PART OF HIS ACT, AND THAT A JEALOUS RIVAL HAD SWORN TO KILL THE ANIMAL. BUCK HAD THEREFORE GIVEN IT TO SANDY TO LOOK AFTER. THE RIVAL HAD NOW LEFT THE CIRCUS, SO THE CHIMP WAS NO LONGER IN DANGER. BUCK FINISHED UP BY OFFERING THE SCHOOL FREE SEATS FOR THE EVENING PERFORMANCE.
IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, THE HEADMASTER READILY FORGAVE SANDY, BOSSY AND CO. WERE RELEASED FROM DETENTION, AND THAT NIGHT --
ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL. I'M JOLLY GLAD I WAS ASKED TO LOOK AFTER THE CHIMP NOW
GOOD OLD SANDY! WE OWE THIS TREAT TO HIM!
THE END

The PYGMIES WHO WANTED TO BECOME GIANTS!

MR. X's "MAGIC"

By Edwin Dale

ONE of my strangest adventures was when I went into the heart of the Congo to make a tribe of giant natives pay their taxes, and found myself suddenly changed into a giant myself.

Yes, believe it or not, I went to sleep one night in my tent in the jungle, to wake up suddenly and find myself a helpless prisoner, with thirty dark-skinned natives straining to lift me up on to their shoulders and carry me off to their village.

I thought at first that it was a nightmare. But it wasn't!

Have you ever looked through a pair of field-glasses the wrong way round? I expect you have. Turn the glasses on a room, and it's like looking into a furnished doll's house, isn't it? The tables and chairs all shrink down to tiny proportions, and everybody inside the room becomes midgets.

Well, that's how everything looked to me on this occasion, when I became a giant.

Perhaps I'd better start telling you the story from the time that I travelled up the Congo River in a motor-launch to a certain territory.

The Resident Officer in charge of that vast area of wild, mountainous jungle-land warmly welcomed me, and escorted me into the living room of his bungalow.

He clapped his hands, and a native of magnificent physique, every inch of 7-foot in height, appeared through the bead curtain leading to the kitchen quarters. Placing an iced drink at my elbow, the giant native left the room silently, his head held proudly in the air.

The jet-black fellow's muscular build, height and bearing impressed me.

"And that, I gather," I said, "is one of this tribe of big-heads who have grown too haughty to pay their taxes?"

The official laughed heartily at my little joke, and then grew quickly serious again.

"M'sieur ees quite right in his description of the tribe!" he said. "Zey have grown into a tribe of big-heads. It is as I said in my report to the Authorities, which you have undoubtedly read!"

I nodded.

"I gather that the tribe have suddenly decided

Mr. X Halted a Jungle War—With Field Glasses and a Mirror!

that they are too big to pay taxes any longer to the white men!" I said.

"That ees exactly it!" answered the R.O. "The shortest man of their tribe is at least seven-foot tall, and they say that they do not see why they should any longer pay taxes to puny white men who are much smaller than themselves!"

"And this could lead to bigger trouble?" I suggested.

"Much bigger! They say that their 'Knowing Ones,' the witch-doctors, have told them that they should pay no more taxes until they can hand them over to a white man who is bigger than themselves. And how can I produce such a giant white man?"

"Don't worry," I grinned. "I've brought one along with me!"

The Resident Officer stared in blank amazement at me, then out through the window to where my little river-launch was moored, and then back at me again.

"You joke, m'sieur?" he said, at length.

"On the contrary," I assured him. "I read your report, and I have come up into the interior prepared to show this tribe of big-heads a white man who is, or will appear to be, much bigger than any of them. When do you next expect a leading member of the tribe to visit you?"

"I have sent word for Magona, the Chief, to come and see me at once," answered the R.O. "He should be here in half-an-hour."

"Good," I said. "Then we must get busy."

I didn't let the R.O. into my plans yet awhile; I wanted to spring a surprise on him.

Returning to the launch, I brought ashore a large, flat parcel loosely wrapped in thin sacking. Unwrapping it, I disclosed what appeared to be a large, unframed mirror, ten feet in height, by four feet wide.

But it was far from being an "ordinary" mirror—as you will see, in a short while.

The Resident Officer looked into it, gave a violent start—and then, as I explained my scheme to him, burst into a roar of laughter.

"It is a ver' clever idea, m'sieur!" he chuckled. "And I t'ink it may work. Magona, the Chief, will not have seen a mirror like it before."

By the time that Magona turned up, the stage was all set.

I watched his arrival from the cabin-porthole of my little launch. He was a colossal fellow—over eight feet in height!

The Resident Officer met Magona, and, looking like a mere midget beside him, led him across a wide expanse of lawn into his living-room.

Following the instructions that I had given him, the R.O. seated himself at his desk. The giant native stood in the centre of the room with his back to the french-windows.

We had moved the desk so that it was now beside the door. In front of the door, directly facing the french-windows, we had erected my mirror.

But the mirror was now hidden behind a pair of thick curtains which could be drawn apart like the curtains in front of a theatre stage. There was a low couch between Magona and the mirror, so that when the curtains were drawn he would not be able to move forward, and see his own reflection.

The R.O. looked up at him sternly.

"Does Magona still refuse to pay the taxes that are due from his tribe to the white men?" he asked.

This was my cue. Coming ashore from the launch, I began crossing the open lawn towards the french-windows at the giant native's back.

Magona thrust out his huge chest, and thumped it with his clenched fists.

"My people pay no more taxes to the white men," he boomed, "until Magona can hand them to a white man who is bigger than himself."

"Then let Magona be prepared to pay his taxes at once," retorted the R.O., "for here is a white man who can make himself much taller, and bigger than any of your tribe. See, he now approaches, to meet Magona face to face!"

And then the R.O. tugged upon a cord at his side which drew open the curtains. He carefully arranged it so that the mirror's edges were still covered by the curtains.

I stepped through the french-windows at Magona's back, and slowly approached the mirror, with my heart thudding against my ribs.

This was my scheme to trick Magona into believing that I was a bigger man than he!

KIDNAPPED BY MYSTERY MEN

AS Magona stared at my reflection in the mirror, his huge frame grew rigid. He drew in a deep breath through dilated nostrils—a breath of mingled alarm, wonderment and awe.

In that mirror, my head, shoulders, my whole body looked to be at least four times their normal size—and growing bigger and bigger, as I slowly moved closer and closer to Magona's back, and to the mirror.

Well, have you guessed it? I expect you have!

The mirror was a trick one. I expect you've looked into one yourself—in the "Hall of Mirrors" at a fairground.

I gave a swift sign to the R.O., and he released the cord in his hand so that the curtains fell back, concealing the mirror.

Suddenly I spoke.

Magona swung round upon his heels. Seeing me, now my normal size, his eyes almost popped out of his head.

"Well, Magona, are you now satisfied?" I demanded sternly. "Have you not seen a white

man who is greater than you in more than only body; one who can grow larger than you at will, and then return to a size that has not the clumsiness of an elephant? Will your tribe now pay the taxes that they owe to the white man?"

Magona's lower jaw sagged open. Then, as if in shame, he sank his chin to his chest.

"Magona has lied to the white men!" he mumbled, thickly. "It is not because we are bigger than the white men that we have not paid our taxes. It is because we are ashamed that we have not told the truth!"

"And what is the truth?" I snapped.

"The truth, massa, is that we cannot afford to pay the taxes!" mumbled Magona.

This was a surprising answer, and one that didn't impress me.

"And why can't you afford to pay them?" I asked. "It is well known to us that your land is fertile, and that you grow much more coffee and rice, cotton and tobacco, than you need for yourselves. The white man's tax is but small!"

"I know it, massa!" answered Magona, humbly. "But to our shame, my people nearly starve—because of the Little People of the Mountains. Every night they come and rob us!"

I was suspicious. This looked to me like another tax-evading dodge.

"The Little People of the Mountains!" I repeated, incredulously. "Who are they? We know of no such tribe!"

"The Little People stand no bigger than twice the length of my hand!" murmured the giant native. "That is why we are ashamed—we are so big, and they so small. Yet every night they come to our village, and, like mice, rob us of our meat and grain, cotton and tobacco. We dare not fight them because they are but spirits of the mountains, and those of our giant warriors who try to approach them are struck down with sudden sickness."

"I will come to your village and see these Little People for myself!" I announced.

To my surprise a look of immense relief came over his face.

"The white massa is brave and good!" he cried gratefully. "Perhaps if the Little People see the white man change himself into a giant, bigger by far than my own people, they will be frightened, and will visit and rob our village no more!"

Inwardly I had a good laugh at myself. This was a case of the biter being bitten with a vengeance. Turning myself into a giant with the whole tribe of giants for an audience was not likely to be easy. There could be no backing out now.

And so, two hours before nightfall that evening, I was pitching my large tropical tent on a carefully-selected site a short distance away from the village of the native giants.

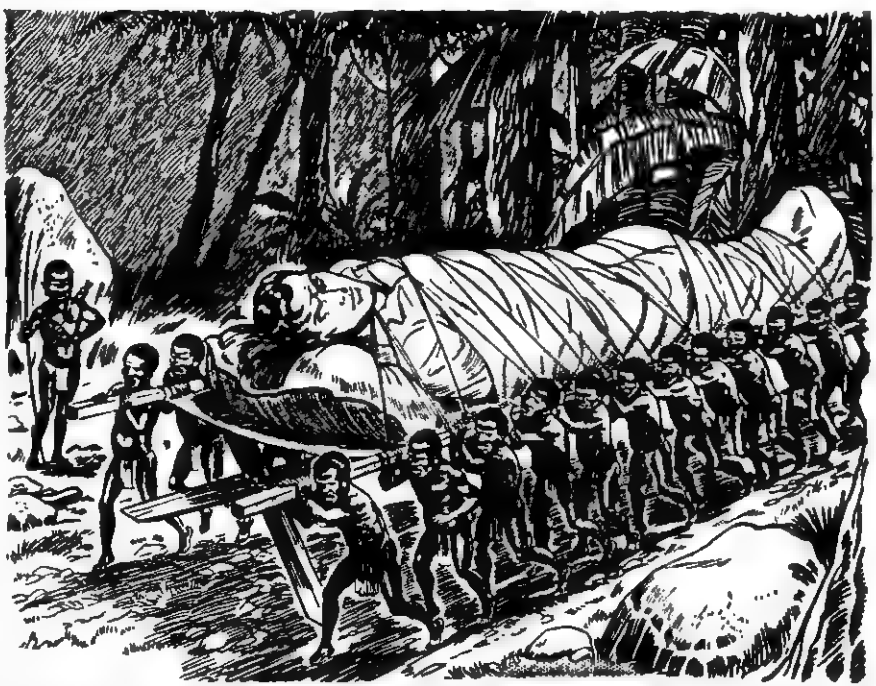
I didn't want any of the giant natives nosing about my tent and discovering the magnifying mirror. So I had chosen a spot in thick jungle.

When I was quite alone—or thought that I was alone—I fixed up the mirror in the gloom at the back of the tent, facing the door, in such a way that I could step out of sight behind the tent-flap, and show my magnified reflection in the mirror.

As I was testing the mirror out, I thought I heard a faint piping sound, not unlike the squeaking of mice, close to the doorway. But looking out through the door, I could see nothing. I decided that I must have imagined the sound.

I carefully packed up the mirror again, and turned from my tent to set off to the village. I intended to tell Magona that, first thing in the morning, I would let his witch-doctors see me change myself into a giant.

As I left the tent a faint track upon the sandy ground caught my eye. I dropped down on to one knee to examine it.



Lashed firmly to his bed by string as strong as rope, Mr. X stared in amazement at the tiny natives. The famous adventurer was being kidnapped by the mysterious Little People of the Mountains!

It was a tiny print of a human foot, not more than three inches long!

"One of the Little People?" I muttered. "Rot! More likely some tiny kid from the village who tottered down to have a look at me."

During my visit to the village, Magona took me round on a tour of the giant huts. He showed me at least one jagged hole close to the ground in each hut, and claimed that they had been made by the raiding Little People. No hole was more than eight inches wide, and some were even smaller. Some had been patched up, others were new ones.

"Could be monkeys—or jungle cats!" I suggested. "Or have any of you ever seen some of these Little People raiding a hut?"

"No, no; we not see them!" answered the giant native, in a shocked whisper. "When we hear the Little People scratching at the wall we cover ourselves up all over with our sleeping-cloth. If we do not, they fire at us arrows no thicker than a straw, which prick like a pin, and cause great sickness for many days!"

Night was now falling. I decided to turn in, and continue my investigations into the mystery of the Little People in the morning.

I am a light sleeper, and it must have been far into the night when I awoke with a sudden start—aware that I had felt something brush lightly across my throat.

No one, I knew, could have entered my tent without waking me—so what was it?

I tried to press myself up from the pillow, only to find that I could scarcely move. Looking down, I saw that I was lashed to my camp-bed by dozens of strands of wire-like native rope, no thicker than string.

With one of these strands biting deeply into my neck, I twisted my head—to see not a sign of any native who could have tied me up like this.

Suddenly I noticed a number of tiny, jagged holes in the canvas wall of my tent, close to the ground.

Then, beneath me I heard faint squeakings—as if there were dozens of mice under my camp-bed.

The next moment I felt the bed and myself being lifted a few inches up from the ground and carried slowly towards the tent door.

The staggering truth flashed home to my brain! I was being kidnapped by the Little People of the Mountains!

WHEN GIANTS BECAME MIDGETS

A FEW minutes later, I found myself being carried slowly but surely through the jungle towards the mountains. As I could see nothing of my bearers, I had the strange sensation that my camp-bed was floating like a magic carpet.

I strained my head forward from the pillow to look down the side of my camp-bed.

And the next moment I had one of the biggest surprises of my life. I and my camp-bed appeared to be carried by fully thirty sturdily built, dark-skinned natives.

And then it dawned upon me that I was still barely two feet from the ground—slightly more than the height of my camp-bed.

I knew then that I wasn't dreaming. I was being carried away through the jungle by a tribe of native dwarfs, with no man among them more than twenty inches in height!

I had plenty of time to lay my head back on the pillow and do some hard thinking.

Gradually I realised that the whole thing wasn't as fantastically impossible as it at first appeared to be. The Little People of the Mountains really existed!

For countless years there have been tribes of pygmies, or little men, living in the African jungle. The natives of these tribes were usually between three and four feet in height. But, all over the world, there have always been dwarfs of much smaller stature.

We Britishers, as you probably know, are growing taller with each generation that passes. No average-sized man of to-day can get into the suits of armour worn in King Arthur's days. Researches have recently proved that you boys of to-day are, on average, quite a bit taller than your fathers were at your age.

My captors were, clearly, a tribe of pygmies to which the reverse was happening. With each passing generation they were becoming smaller, until now their average height was less than 20 inches.

For the rest of the night the Little People struggled to carry me right through the mountains, and it was dawn when they at last reached their destination.

My camp-bed was placed triumphantly upon the fringe of a thatched-roofed village. To my amazement it was almost an exact replica of the village of the giant natives—only here the roof-tops of the huts were only a little higher than my camp-bed.

One of the dwarfs struck a tiny gong, and in response to its musical note, hundreds of the Little People emerged from the doll's-house huts and swarmed around my camp-bed.

Several of the Little People climbed up the bed's legs, and began walking all over me. One little bantam-cock of a fellow, wearing a head-dress made of the tips of gaily-covered feathers, stood on my shoulder, and looked down at me with a friendly sort of grin on his cricket-ball sized face.

"Me Li'pu, Chief of the Little People!" he said in a sharp, squeaky voice. To my surprise he spoke in the same tongue as the tribe of giants.

" When you built your house of cloth, some of my scouts see you make yourself many times bigger than you are now."

I nodded—thinking of the mice-like squeaking that I had heard, and of the tiny footprint I had found outside my tent.

" We will set you free," continued Li'pu, " if you will promise that you will do us no harm, and you will show us how we can become big men, like the other tribe."

I saw that another party of the dwarf natives had brought my wrapped-up mirror along, and so I gave the required promise.

When I had been set free I had to get up from the camp-bed carefully, and take great pains not to tread on any of the little fellows. They backed away from me, leaving me encircled with a ring of midget warriors aiming straw-like arrows in tiny little bows in my direction.

Those arrows, small though they were, were evidently tipped with some poison—and it was this poison which had made many of the giant natives sick for days after feeling the pain of a slight pin-prick.

When I had unwrapped the mirror, the Little People crowded round in front of it, laughing and dancing with joy as they stared at their own magnified reflections.

But when they turned away, and looked at each other, and saw that they were still only little men, their faces grew glum.

Li'pu approached me, and so I sat down upon the camp-bed in order to be able to hear what he had to say.

" Well, what it is, Li'pu? " I asked.

" Make us so that we are always big, please, white man! " he pleaded. " So that we can then go to war with the other tribe! "

" But why should you want to fight the giants? " I asked him. " They wish you no harm—even though you steal their food! "

" We wish them no harm—but we must fight them or die! " cried Li'pu. " We are too small to grow our own food. When we plant our own crops in our small fields, the beasts of the jungle come and tear them to pieces, and we are too small to drive them away. We must grow big, or our tribe will perish! "

" I see what you mean, Li'pu! " I murmured. " Yes, a tribe of dwarfs haven't much hope of survival in the wild jungle—unless they've got protectors! "

And then it occurred to me that the right and fitting protectors for the Little People were the giant natives. And surely this could be arranged—if I could make the giant natives realise that the little people were not spirits, but people of flesh and blood like themselves—only far less fortunate.

Then I had a brain-wave. Later that day I set out for the giant tribe's village—and this time, with the whole tribe of Little People following me.

On my way I collected powerful field-glasses from my tent.

Magona and his giant tribesmen turned out from their huts and stared in amazement and terror at the army of dwarfs.

Halting the Little People, I advanced towards the giant natives with only Li-pu trotting at my side.

" Listen, Magona! " I cried. " I bring the Little People to you to show you that they are not spirits that would harm you, but men like yourselves. Touch Li-pu, their chief, and see that this is true! "

After a lot of hesitation, Magona plucked up enough courage to run his fingers over the dwarf's arms and shoulders.

A look of immense surprise came over his face, but still he shook his head vigorously.

" Big men cannot be friends with little men," he said gruffly. " It is not right than they should be! "

" Little men must always fear big men," piped Li-pu.

" You are both wrong," I said. " All men are only the size that the eyes see them to be! Magona, look now at the Little People! "

And I held the field-glasses before his eyes, pointing them towards the little army of pygmies.

" A—aah! " gasped Magona. " Now I see the Little People as big, and even bigger than we are ourselves! "

Then I took the glasses from him, and turning them round, gave them to Li-pu, telling him to look through them at the giants. Of course, with the glasses the wrong way round, the huge natives appeared to be no larger than midgets.

" I see them now no greater than my own people," he gasped in amazement. " With such men, we could be brothers and have no fear! "

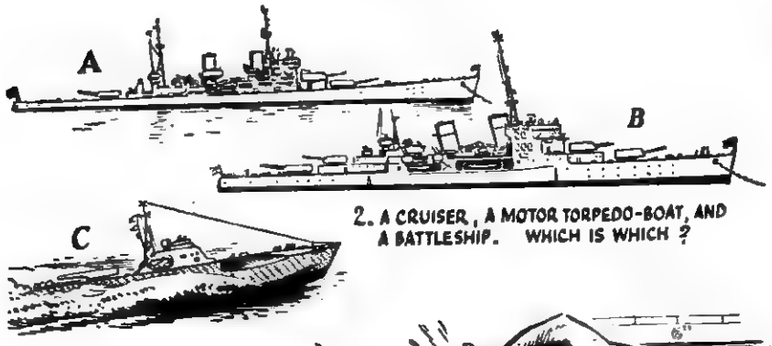
Well, the long and the short of it is that Magona and his giants announced that henceforth they would adopt the Little People and be their protectors!

And now that the Little People no longer raid Magona's village, the giants can pay their taxes!

WORLD-WIDE QUIZ

Have a Shot at the Answers—Then Check Them with the Correct Ones on Page 145

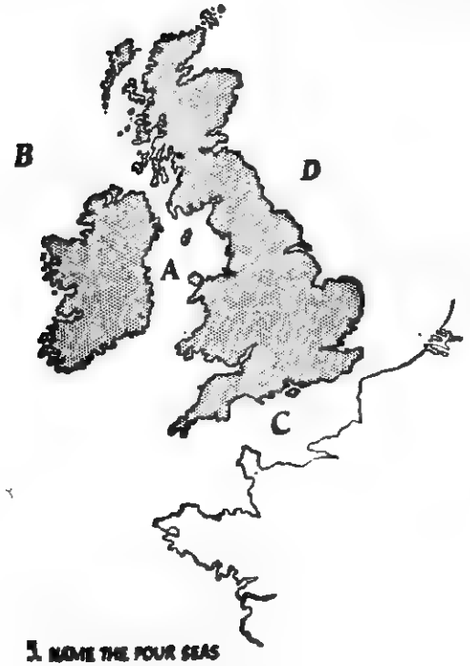
1. WHERE IS THE SCRIPT IN THIS PICTURE ?



2. A CRUISER, A MOTOR TORPEDO-BOAT, AND A BATTLESHIP. WHICH IS WHICH ?

3. WHAT IS MEANT BY "UNADOPTED" ?

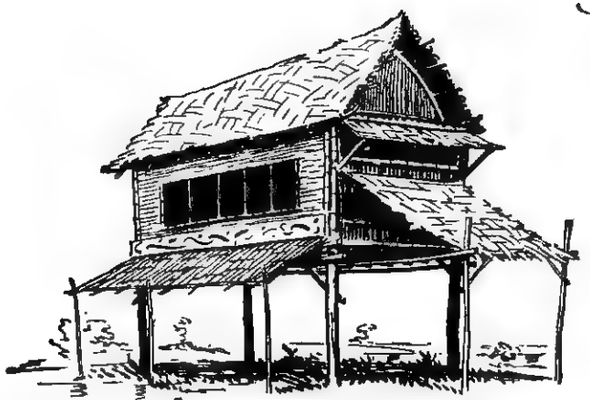
4. WHAT STROKE IS HE USING ?



5. NAME THE FOUR SEAS

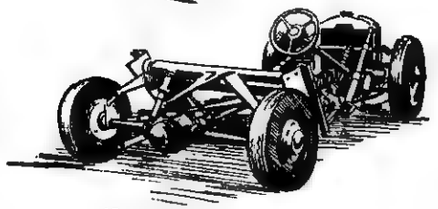
6. WHAT DOES THE NOTICE TELL YOU ?

7. IN WHICH COUNTRY DOES SHE LIVE ?

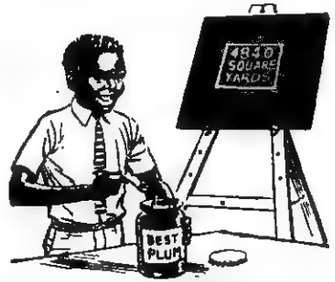


8. WOULD YOU SEE THIS DWELLING IN SIAM OR RUSSIA ?

9. WHAT IS THIS SORT OF KETTLE CALLED ?

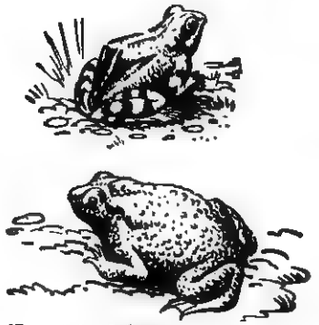


10. THIS PART OF A CAR IS THE —— ?

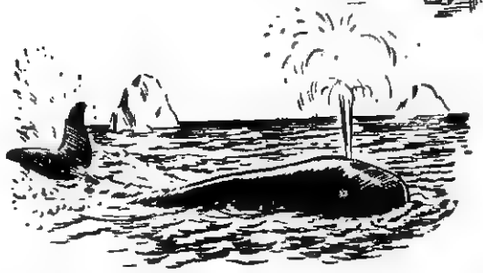


11. WHAT ISLAND DOES THIS SUGGEST ?

12. HE IS A SEAL HUNTER. WHY DOES HE HAVE A WHITE BOARD IN FRONT OF HIM ?

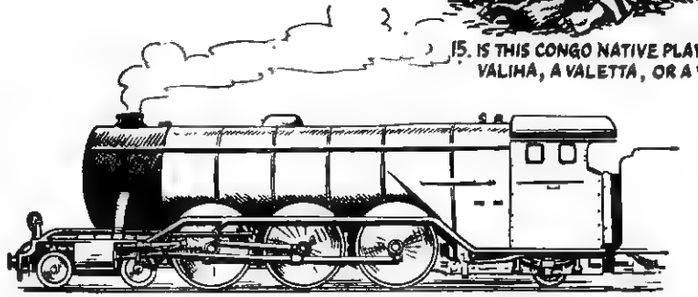


13. WHICH IS A FROG AND WHICH A TOAD ?



14. IS IT A FISH OR AN ANIMAL ?

15. IS THIS CONGO NATIVE PLAYING A VALIHA, A VALETTA, OR A VALETA ?



16. WHY DO RAILWAYMEN CALL IT A 4–6–2 ?

17. IS THE SIGN A DODO, A POGO, OR A JU-JU ?

TAMING A TROUBLE-MAKER

By Arthur Deam

BOB'S PROBLEM PAL

"WELL, all I can say is, now that Farley Pritchard's coming here, I can see trouble," growled Ray. "He's been asked to leave two schools already because of his red-hot temper, and I don't imagine he'll be any better here at Hightower."

Ray glared down the road which curled past our school as he spoke, as if daring the new boy we were waiting for to arrive.

"I'm sure it won't be as bad as that," I said sturdily. I'm Bob Belman, captain of the Fourth Form at Hightower, and Ray Brentford is my best pal. "I know Farley's got a terrible temper, but my Dad says he's a good chap otherwise. I'll do my best to see Farley keeps out of trouble."

Ray grunted.

"Well, I don't envy you the job. I'm jolly glad my Dad isn't his father's pal, too. Good chap or not, from what you tell me, Farley's always fighting someone, or smashing something."

"Only because he's not left alone," I corrected. "If no one upsets him, he can't lose his temper, can he?"

"I'm not so sure," said Ray gloomily. "Farley Pritchard seems to lose his temper at the least thing. If you weren't my pal, I wouldn't share our study with him at any price."

"Here's Farley's taxi now," I said quickly, with relief.

It was unfortunate, but when Ray took a dislike to someone, that was that!

There was truth in what he had said, though. Farley Pritchard was reputed to have the worst temper any chap could have. Not a day passed without him getting into trouble of some sort. But our Dads were pals, and this was Farley's last chance at any good school, so I was determined to help him.

The taxi swung through the gates and stopped in the quad a few yards away. We raced towards it as Farley stepped out.

Then I stared. We had never met before and, at first sight, Farley Pritchard didn't look any different from any other chap I knew. He was tall and dark,

It Was No Easy Task to Cool Down the Boy with the Red-Hot Temper!

thin, but with wide shoulders. His face was pleasant enough.

Only his air of assurance was queer for a new chap, but he was probably used to being new at a school by now.

"How do!" I said, as the taxi moved away. "I'm Bob Belman. This is my pal, Ray Brentford."

"Oh, yes!" He took my hand and his voice was wary; he expected to be ragged, I could see. "I've heard a lot about you from Dad."

"And we've heard a lot about you," Ray said ominously.

They looked at each other. Farley's eyes narrowed and his lips tightened. They didn't shake hands. If you couldn't actually hear the air crackle, you could feel it.

"Come up to the study," I said hastily. "We've got tea ready. Your gear's arrived and been put in the dorm."

We went upstairs. I felt as if I were standing on the edge of a volcano. I saw trouble looming ahead, unless I was careful.

But Farley looked slightly surprised and gratified when he saw the tea. It was rather good and had cost half my week's allowance.

"We'll have to hurry," I said, as we sat down. "I've got a swimming test this evening, to see if I'm good enough to get into the school team. We're racing in next week's gala."

"But surely the team's been picked?" asked Farley.

"Oh, yes. But one of the chap's dropped out and they're giving me a trial," I said cautiously.

I was jolly pleased, but I didn't want to sound boastful.

"And you're bound to win, even if it is a senior team," Ray said loyally. He can't swim, but he's my unofficial "trainer." "You're the best swimmer in the school, outside the team."

"Are you?" Farley looked at me quickly, and I flushed. "I do a bit of swimming myself," he said casually.

He was interested. I saw that. And I suddenly had an idea that, if he got interested in something, he might keep out of trouble!

"Have you got any speed?" I asked. "We might use you in our junior team—"

Too late I saw Ray's scowl. No, he didn't like Farley!

"How could Farley be any good?" Ray muttered. "He hasn't stayed long enough in one place to learn much."

Farley stiffened. I saw his face change again. In a flash he was on his feet. His eyes blazed sudden fury.

"No—I don't stay long, do I?" he gritted. "But only because I have my own way of dealing with people like—you!"

He seized the end of the table and jerked. Before Ray or I knew what was happening, Ray's chair went back. With a yell and a crash he hit the floor. With another crash the table landed on top of him, tea, milk, cakes and bread and butter showering after.

I jumped up, appalled.

"Farley, you crazy idiot—"

He faced me. His teeth were clenched. Gone was that pleasant expression. He was in a raging, furious, ungovernable temper that startled and alarmed me. No wonder he had left two schools!

"Go on, yell for the Headmaster!" he said between his teeth. "I don't care. I thought you were a decent chap and you bring me here to insult me—"

"What's going on here?" demanded a voice.

Amid all the confusion, the door had opened. There stood Hopgood, our Senior Prefect, surveying the wreckage and Ray.

Furiously Ray pushed aside the table and scrambled to his feet. He had jam in his hair and cream on his nose. He looked like a comic in a slap-stick film. His expression, however, showed he wasn't in a comical mood.

"He did it!" Ray fired and pointed straight at Farley. "He upset the table on me!"

Hopgood looked at Farley. So did I. Farley was standing still. His anger had vanished. He looked reckless, defiant and scornful.

He didn't attempt to defend himself, and I think that's what did it. I could excuse Ray sneaking—I didn't imagine he knew what he was saying—but I did know this was partly his fault. Yet Farley said nothing. He refused to shift the blame.

Was that why he had been asked to leave so often? I stepped forward.

"I—I'm sorry, Hopgood. It—it was an accident—"

Ray spluttered. Farley stared at me in surprise. Hopgood gazed at him again, then at the wreckage and frowned. He'd heard all about Farley and his temper.

"It doesn't look like an accident to me," he said suspiciously. "If it was, it was rank carelessness on your part. You and Brentford will take a hundred lines. I'll let you off, Pritchard, this time, as you're new. The Head wants to see you. You'd better come along."

He jerked his head and Farley went out with him.

Ray and I were left to stare at each other across the wreckage.

Ray drew a deep, long breath.

"An accident. One hundred lines. An accident! When that raving lunatic throws a table at me! Look here, Bob, I'm not sharing this study with him. Either he goes, or I go."

I stared at him in dismay. Ray was my pal and, for all his annoying ways, the study wouldn't be the same without him.

But if I asked for Farley to be transferred, I would be breaking my word to my Dad—and just when I was beginning to believe Farley wasn't so bad a chap after all.

HE LOST THE RACE ON PURPOSE

"RAY—calm down!" I begged desperately. "I know how you feel, but it was your fault!"

"My fault?" Ray glared.

"You started it," I reasoned. "I know he ought to expect to be ragged, but you knew his temper. And you sneaked on him, too."

Ray stared at me blankly. He didn't honestly realise it for the moment. Then, as he did, his face began to grow red.

"I know you didn't mean it—but look here," I said, "I don't want to see you leave and I don't want to kick Farley out. I believe, if we give him another chance—"

"Chance, nothing!" snorted Ray. "I think he's crazy."

I realised his opinion hadn't altered, so I tried another tack.

"Well, if I kick him out, because of what happened, it's going to give him a bad opinion of Hightower, isn't it? Whatever you think of him, you don't want him to believe we don't play fair, surely—"

That was the best line. Ray frowned.

"Oh, all right!" he said grudgingly. "But only one chance! Now let's get this mess cleared up and salvage something to eat."

I was in high spirits. I knew, if he possibly could, Ray would keep his word. Farley could stay. And I felt if I were right about Farley, we all three might be pals before long.

Fortunately, Farley did not return while we cleared up and made a snack meal from what we fished out of the wreckage he had created. Obviously the Head was keeping him. As soon as we had finished, Ray and I hurried down to our indoor swimming pool.

The others were already assembling. Hopgood, who was time-keeper, and the two Fifth Formers who were trying for the place I wanted. There was also a fair sprinkling of the Fourth to cheer me on.

I was rather nervous as I changed and left the cubicle. It would be a great thing for the Fourth, as well as for me, if I could get that place in the senior team. I mustn't let them down.

Hopgood signalled to me.

"This side of the bath, Belman. Brentford, stand back there."

"Good luck, old chap," said Ray. "I—gosh, look!"

I turned. Striding down the side of the bath came the Head and, following him, with a swim suit wrapped in a towel, was Farley.

"Ah, Hopgood!" the Head called. "I'd like you to give Farley Pritchard here a trial. I have been told he is exceptionally good—"

I wondered if the Head had the same thought as I had. If Farley did something worth while, he might keep out of trouble.

But how would it affect me? If Farley were good, I stood no chance of swimming in the team. On the other hand, the school came first and we needed our best swimmers for the gala.

Farley changed quickly and came to take up a position on my right.

"Four-lengths race!" shouted Hopgood. "On your marks. Get set—go!"

All together the four of us dived into the pool.

I glided beneath the surface and came up. Out of the corners of my eyes I saw a Fifth Former on my left and Farley on my right. Kicking hard, I struck out.

Down the bath we sped. Vaguely I heard the shouts of the Fourth. The two Fifth Formers were well behind—but Farley on my right was still there. Together we touched the bar at the far end.

Three lengths to go. We turned together, but with an easy, effortless glide, I saw Farley move away. I went after him. He was swimming slowly, almost lazily, but with each stroke he was pulling farther ahead. He was a champ, if ever a chap was!

The Fourth were shouting, encouraging me. Of course, they didn't know Farley. The Fifth Formers, I gathered, had just turned. The race was between myself and Farley—and Farley was winning.

But I wanted that place in the team. I increased my stroke.

I caught up. At the end of the second length I touched the bar just before him. But again he beat me to the turn. His stroke quickened. I tried to quicken mine—but it was no good. Half way down the bath he was four feet in front.

"Oh, come on, Bob!" I heard Ray's agonised voice.

I put all I had into a spurt to catch up. Amazingly, it began to work. I began to make ground. Slowly, slowly, I pulled up. Four seconds after Farley I touched the bar.

"Come on, Bob! Only one more length!" someone yelled.

Farley now seemed to be tiring. I was overhauling him easily. Half-way down the bath we were level. Three-quarters and I was in front!

To my amazement I romped home, the winner by two yards!

The cheers from the Fourth were terrific as I hauled myself out of the water. I was panting, puffed, but it was worth it. I had won! I had the place in the senior team.

I turned to help Farley. But he was already hauling himself out. He straightened and I offered him my hand.

"Good show, Farley—" I began.

Then I stared. He wasn't tired. Here was I, exhausted after a really gruelling race, but Farley was as cool and as unruffled as if he had only been for a leisurely paddle down the bath. If he had been racing all-out, he would have been tired. But he wasn't.

It could only mean one thing. Farley had slowed down not because he hadn't been able to make the pace, but because—

The defiant smile on his face as he took my hand proved it.

"Farley!" I jerked. "You could easily have beaten me—yet you let me win!"

"Did I?" he asked mockingly.

He was not even breathless! He wouldn't admit it, but I knew it was true. And I could guess why he had done it. Because I had got him out of a jam when he had upset the table!

Whatever his temper, he was a jolly fine chap at heart! But I couldn't let him do this!

He was a swimming champ. I doubted if any of the seniors could match his speed. We needed him for the gala. I wanted the place, but he was so much better, and for the sake of the school he ought to have it!

"Farley, you clot!" I exclaimed. "I can't take this. We'll have to have another trial to see which of us is the better swimmer."

"Shut up!" he said fiercely. "You've won, haven't you? So what?"

"Here, who do you think you're talking to?" It was Ray, coming to my support, in the forefront of the rest of the Fourth.

Farley whirled. He looked at Ray and his lips tightened.

"I wasn't talking to you," he said curtly.

"You were having a row with my pal," Ray snapped. "You can't talk to Bob like that."

"Wait a minute!" I protested. "Ray, you don't understand—"

"I do! And it's not my fault if he wants a row—"

In an instant Farley's face flamed. His eyes flashed fire and fury as his temper rose—

"I don't. But you do. I think you need to—cool down!"

He pounced. Alarmed, guessing his intention, I made a grab at him—and missed. Ray was caught unawares. There was a yell, a splash—

Ray sat down in the shallow end of the swimming pool.

Amid a surprised silence, Farley smiled down at him recklessly.

"Now go and sneak about that!" he challenged, and strode off.

I looked after him, then back to Ray. One glance at Ray's face told me this was the last straw. He wouldn't sneak, but, unless I could do something about it, from now on he and Farley would be deadly enemies!

Bob carefully rigged the dummy amongst the tree branches. A gentle tug on the attached string would bring the phoney schoolboy toppling into the river—and that would suit Bob's plans nicely!

A STUNT GOES WRONG!

"I DON'T care what you say," Ray said stubbornly. "You can't make me believe that fellow deliberately lost the race to you. He hasn't got a scrap of sportsmanship in him."

It was an hour later, and Ray and I were in the study—arguing, as could be expected, about Farley. I had told Ray what I knew. Ray refused to believe it.

To make things worse, no one except myself and a few members of the Fourth had actually seen Farley push him, it seemed, so Ray hadn't even the doubtful comfort of seeing Farley punished for it.

"You're dead wrong," I said. "If only you would keep on Farley's right side, you'd soon find out he's a good chap."

"He hasn't got a right side," Ray said stubbornly. "Either he leaves this study, or I do!" he repeated angrily. "Now choose!"

I groaned. I had won the place in the senior swimming team, but I was not pleased. The place should go to Farley, but how was I going to make anyone believe that? How was I going to make Ray believe that Farley was a good chap, for all his temper?

"Ray—" I said slowly, as I had a sudden, wonderful idea. "If I prove I'm right about Farley, will you, at least, call a truce?"

"How?" demanded Ray. "But if you could, perhaps—" he added, relenting.

"Just be on the left bank of the river at three o'clock to-morrow afternoon—till then, keep out of Farley's way," I said.

I went out before he could question me and hurried down to the gym. The only way to prove I was right about Farley was to demonstrate his swimming ability to someone. And who better to start on than Ray?

I thought I knew how to do it. From the gym I borrowed one of the dummies we used for life-saving, and a length of our fishing twine. As it was prep-time, no one was about, so I slipped over the wall and headed for our river.

There, on the left bank, I propped the dummy in the branches of a tree overhanging the water, tied the twine to it and let it dangle in the water. This was an important part of my plan—the plan to make a trouble-maker turn up trumps!

To-morrow afternoon, Farley and I would come this way in a boat. I would pull that twine and the dummy would make a most realistic fall into the river. I would make Farley think someone was in difficulties and he was bound to swim at top-speed to the spot.

But I, too, would naturally swim with him—at my best speed. I knew it couldn't equal Farley's and Ray, on the bank, would see us and realise it too. It would be the race all over again, but this time Farley would not be holding back!

I felt very satisfied when I returned to the school and, next afternoon, having seen Ray off, I approached Farley.

Since last evening, we had scarcely seen him. Out of school he had been left alone. He had not come to the study at all, which I thought jolly decent of him, but Ray said it was cowardice. Trust Ray!

"Farley," I said, "I'm going fishing. Like to come along?"

He looked at me quickly, surprisedly.

"Where's your pal?"

If Ray could have heard that, he might have had second thoughts. But Ray was—or should be—already at the river.

"He's off on his own this afternoon," I said, quite truthfully. "I thought you might like to try our pool near the school. Dad says you're keen on fishing."

"Well—" He hesitated. "If you don't mind."

We took one of the school boats, and I asked Farley to row while I steered towards the pool—and the left bank near the dummy.

There was no sign of Ray. But I knew he wouldn't let me down. He must be about. Carefully I steered under the tree and grabbed the twine as we passed. Then we headed upstream.

Now! I decided.

"Look!" I cried—and, turned, pulling the twine.

With a swish, the dummy came out of the tree.

And not only the dummy! But Ray, as well!

Too late I guessed what had happened. Ray had not known about the dummy. Seeing it, he had climbed up to investigate and got entangled in the strong twine.

While I watched in dismay, Ray and the dummy hit the water together!

"Gosh!" Farley was up even before myself. "He can't swim, can he? Trust him to get in a mess—"

His shoes and blazer were off in a jiffy. In a clean, racing dive he was overboard and I followed.

As I bobbed up, I saw Ray's head next to the dummy. Helplessly he threshed about, trying to keep afloat. I saw him go down once—

We'd never reach him in time! And it was my fault! If Ray drowned it would be my fault. Why had I planned this stupid idea?—

Then I stared at Farley.

He had shot ahead like a fish, making no splash, cleaving through the water at a pace that left me gasping. Faster, faster, nearer Ray. Would he reach Ray in time? I couldn't, but *he* might.

Ray went down again. He was drowning! No! He'd come up. And now, in front

of me, I saw Farley's dark head.

Then Farley had reached Ray and seized him just as he was going down for the third time.

Pulled to the surface, Ray did not struggle. As I reached them, he gave me a feeble grin.

"Take his left arm, Bob—" jerked Farley; he was breathless now!

It was easy after that and, though I do say it, I am pretty strong at life-saving drill. I grabbed Ray's left arm, Farley shifted his grip and we both kicked out. Then suddenly we were in shallow water and I felt the ground under my feet.

On the bank we quickly applied artificial respiration. But Ray was all right. Soon Farley sat back on his heels.

"Well, that's that," he said, and I knew he didn't only mean that Ray was all right. Ray knew the truth about his swimming now!

Seeing non-swimmer Ray floundering helplessly in the deep water, Bob and his hot-tempered new boy pal swam all out to the rescue! Would they be in time?

Ray looked at him awkwardly and struggled into a sitting position.

"I guess—well—you saved my life. And—and Bob was right!" he blurted. "You're a champ. You did lose the swimming trial deliberately yesterday."

Farley brushed back his hair, shaking off the water.

"And Bob's got his place in the team," he said curtly.

Ray grabbed his hand. He shook it.

"Bob wanted you to have the place in the team, and you're going to have it. I still think he's a jolly good swimmer—but you're better. When he goes to Hopgood to tell him what's happened, I'm going to back him up. You deserve to be in the team."

"Hear, hear!" I said. "If Hopgood could have seen you just now, he—"

"I did," said Hopgood, and stepped out of the bushes at the side of the path. "Good show, chaps," he added, as we stared. "Several of us were rowing up river, and we picked up your boat and the dummy and came here at once."

He turned to Farley. "Pritchard, you can't get out of it this time—though if I hadn't seen you swim just now, I wouldn't have believed you're so fast. You're a wonder. You must be in our team for the gala."

Farley looked pleased, but doubtful, too.

"What about Bob Delman?"

"I think," said Hopgood, with a grin, "we could use Bob in the backstroke heats. I didn't realise he was so strong, until I saw his life-saving act just now. You both deserve a place."

"Oh, gosh!" I blurted. "Thanks!"

"But no getting into trouble before the gala, Pritchard," warned Hopgood.

"Don't worry. I'll see to that," grinned Ray.

This time Farley only smiled and my heart leapt. No doubt about it. I had succeeded. They were friends!

We were all friends—even after I explained my trick with the dummy! And Ray and I stuck by Farley right up to the gala, while, as I suspected, Farley kept out of trouble.

It was probably the first time for years he'd been trusted, and he wanted to live up to it. He'd mastered his red-hot temper!

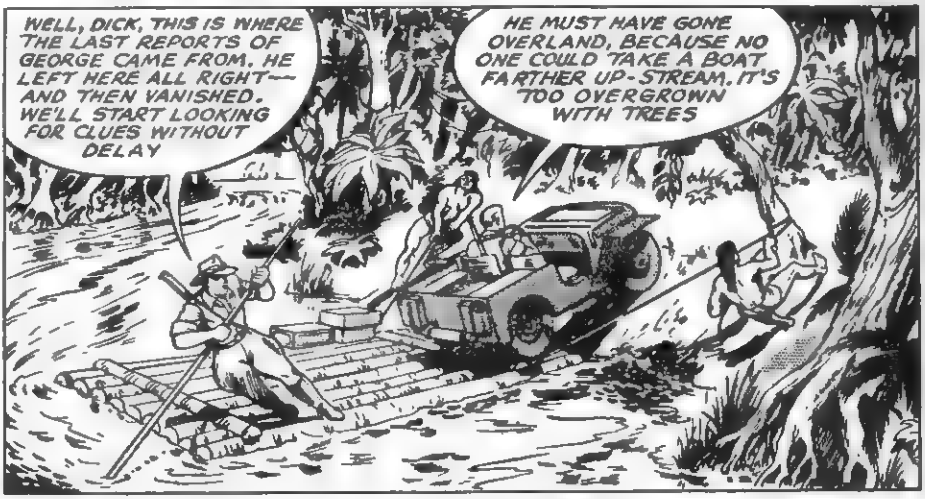
To prove it, he won every heat for which we entered him at the gala and, to my greatest surprise, I won the backstroke against all comers, giving our team the maximum points to win the Gala Cup! That night we held a big celebration in our study and this time Farley didn't up-end the table.

Whatever had happened in the past, Farley had come to Hightower to stay—and Ray and I had gained a real pal!

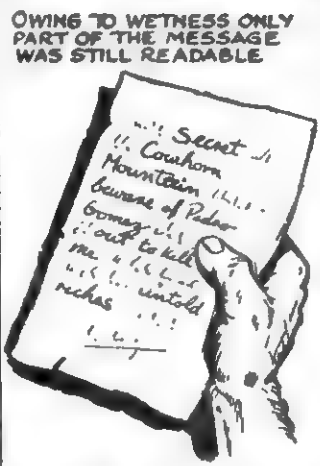
The Jungle Jeep Adventurers

BY JACK MAXWELL

IN THE HEART OF THE AMAZONIAN JUNGLE, LEN DALTON AND HIS CHUM, DICK ARCHER, WERE UNLOADING A JEEP. THEY HAD BROUGHT IT UP-RIVER TO HELP THEM TO SEARCH FOR LEN'S EXPLORER BROTHER, GEORGE. GEORGE HAD DISAPPEARED WHILE ON A LONE EXPEDITION TO A STRANGE NATIVE TRIBE WHO WERE SAID TO LIVE IN AN UNKNOWN VALLEY BEYOND THE MOUNTAINS

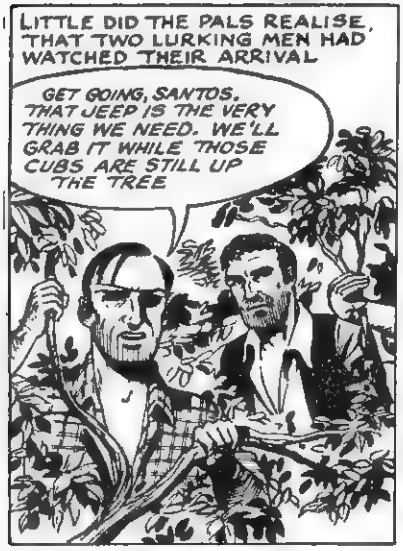

WELL, DICK, THIS IS WHERE THE LAST REPORTS OF GEORGE CAME FROM. HE LEFT HERE ALL RIGHT—AND THEN VANISHED. WE'LL START LOOKING FOR CLUES WITHOUT DELAY
HE MUST HAVE GONE OVERLAND, BECAUSE NO ONE COULD TAKE A BOAT FARTHER UP-STREAM. IT'S TOO OVERGROWN WITH TREES

ONCE THE JEEP WAS ASHORE, THE NATIVES WITH THE RAFT BEGAN THEIR RETURN JOURNEY. ALL AT ONCE LEN GAVE A GASP
LOOK IN THE REEDS THERE, DICK! IT'S A FOOD TIN. IT MUST HAVE BEEN WASHED THERE BY THE CURRENT



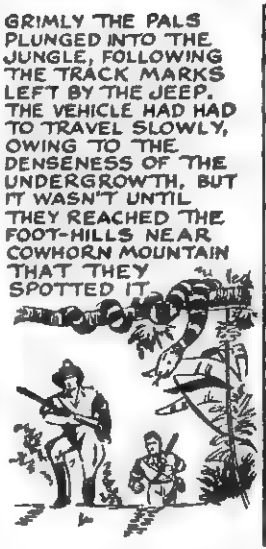
THIS IS AMAZING, LEN. I WONDER WHO PEDRO GOMEZ IS, AND WHY HE WANTS TO MURDER YOUR BROTHER?
I GUESS WE'LL FIND THAT OUT SOONER OR LATER. FOR A START I SUGGEST THAT WE CLIMB THIS TALL TREE AND GET THE LIE OF THE LAND

THAT MUST BE COWHORN MOUNTAIN
YES—AND THE RIVER RUNS FROM THAT DIRECTION. SO MEBBE THAT'S WHERE THE MESSAGE FLOATED FROM. WE'LL HEAD THERE PRONTO


LITTLE DID THE PALS REALISE, THAT TWO LURKING MEN HAD WATCHED THEIR ARRIVAL
GET GOING, SANTOS. THAT JEEP IS THE VERY THING WE NEED. WE'LL GRAB IT WHILE THOSE CUBS ARE STILL UP THE TREE

THE PALS WERE JUST SHINNING DOWN THE TREE WHEN THEY SAW WHAT WAS HAPPENING
GREAT SCOT! THERE'S A COUPLE OF THUGS MAKING OFF WITH OUR JEEP. HEY--STOP!

WITHIN SECONDS THE JEEP HAD VANISHED
THE THIEVING TWISTERS! I'M CERTAIN ONE OF THEM IS PEDRO GOMEZ, THE GUY GEORGE WARNED US ABOUT. BUT WHY SHOULD THEY COLLAR OUR JEEP?
THEY MUST WANT IT FOR SOME SPECIAL PURPOSE--A PURPOSE CONNECTED WITH GEORGE. SO WE'LL TRACK 'EM DOWN, AND, IN DOING SO, P'RAPS FIND GEORGE, TOO


GRIMLY THE PALS PLUNGED INTO THE JUNGLE, FOLLOWING THE TRACK MARKS LEFT BY THE JEEP. THE VEHICLE HAD HAD TO TRAVEL SLOWLY, OWING TO THE DENSENESS OF THE UNDERGROWTH, BUT IT WASN'T UNTIL THEY REACHED THE FOOT-HILLS NEAR COWHORN MOUNTAIN THAT THEY SPOTTED IT.

THERE IT IS--HEADING FOR THAT PASS. WHAT THE DICKENS CAN THE THUGS' GAME BE? AND WHAT HAS YOUR MISSING BROTHER GOT TO DO WITH THEM?
I'M AS BAFFLED AS YOU ARE, DICK. BUT I'M NOT RESTING UNTIL WE'VE SOLVED THE MYSTERY

I SAY, DICK. IF WE CLIMB UP HERE WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO REACH THE PASS AHEAD OF THE JEEP, BECAUSE OF THE LONG DETOUR IT MUST MAKE. ARE YOU GAME?
GAME? I'LL SAY I AM! WE'LL HAVE A SMACK AT AMBUSHING THE SCUGS

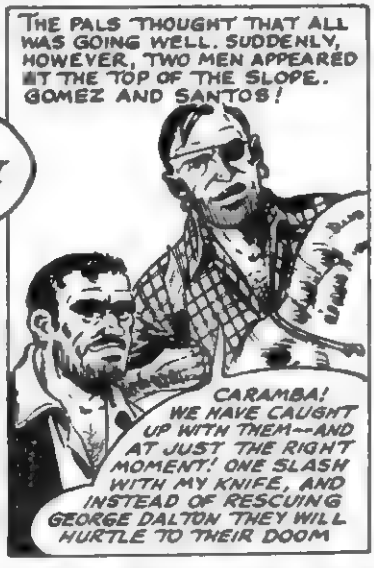
AFTER A PERILOUS CLIMB THE PALS GAINED A POINT JUST ABOVE THE PASS. THEY PEERED DOWN -- THEN THEIR EYES GLEAMED
THERE'S THE JEEP! NOW TO STOP IT!

THIS BOULDER IS JUST THE JOB. HELP ME TO DISLODGE IT, DICK
ONE MIGHTY HEAVE, AND THE BOULDER WENT CRASHING DOWN
GOOD! IT'S GOING TO LAND IN FRONT OF THE JEEP AND BAR THE WAY. THE THUGS WILL HAVE TO STOP
GOMEZ HAD SEEN THE PERIL THAT THREATENED. HASTILY HE APPLIED THE BRAKES
CARAMBA! THE BRITISH CUBS HAVE CAUGHT US NAPPING
THE BOULDER HAS STARTED AN AVALANCHE. WE MUST SEEK COVER--QUICK!
AS GOMEZ AND SANTOS STREAKED FOR SHELTER, LEN AND DICK HASTILY SCRAMBLED DOWN THE CLIFFSIDE
IF WE CAN RECOVER OUR JEEP, WE'LL GET TO COWHORN MOUNTAIN WELL AHEAD OF GOMEZ. BY THE TIME HE ARRIVES WE MAY HAVE BEEN ABLE TO FIND GEORGE!
THERE WAS A LENGTH OF ROPE IN THE JEEP. SWIFTLY LEN LOOPED ONE END ROUND THE BOULDER AND FASTENED THE OTHER END TO THE WINCH ON THE BACK OF THE JEEP
THAT'S THE IDEA! I'LL HOLD THOSE THUGS AT BAY WHILE YOU HAUL THE BOULDER ASIDE
COME ON, MY BEAUTY, DO YOUR STUFF! PULL! PULL!

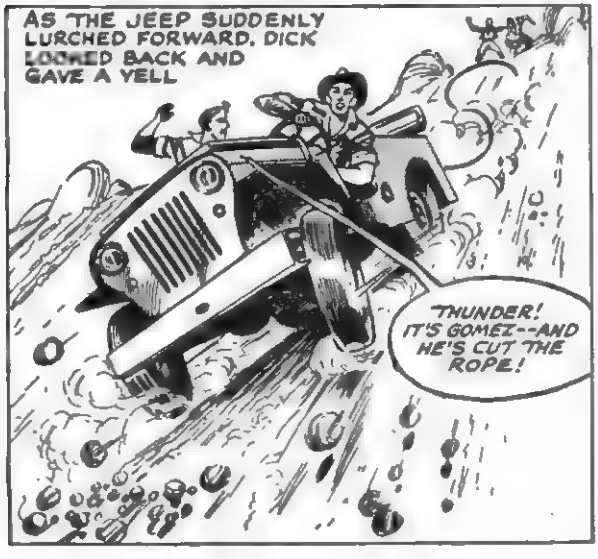
SLOWLY BUT SURELY THE BOULDER BEGAN TO MOVE. THEN---
I'VE DONE IT! JUMP IN, DICK
A MOMENT LATER, THE PALS WERE ROARING AWAY-- WITH THE TWO MEN FIRING AT THEM SAVAGELY BUT IN VAIN
COWHORN MOUNTAIN NEXT STOP. I'VE A HUNCH GEORGE IS THERE--AND STILL ALIVE. IF SO, WE'LL SOON TRACK HIM DOWN
LEN'S HOPES WERE DASHED, HOWEVER, A LITTLE LATER
GOSH! WE'VE COME TO THE END OF THE TRAIL. NOT EVEN A JEEP COULD TAKE THAT GRADIENT
LEN WASN'T STUMPED FOR MANY MINUTES, REVERSING THE JEEP, HE FASTENED ONE END OF THEIR ROPE TO THE WINCH
WHAT'S THE IDEA?
YOU'LL SEE IN A COUPLE OF SHAKES
LEN TIED THE OTHER END ROUND HIS WAIST, AND THEN, WITH THE HELP OF A PICK FROM THEIR STORES, CLIMBED UP THE FACE OF THE CLIFF
HAVING MADE HIS END OF THE ROPE FAST AT THE TOP OF THE SLOPE, LEN SLID DOWN AGAIN TO REJOIN HIS CHUM
BY GINGER, I CAN SEE YOUR WHEEZE NOW. YOU MEAN TO MAKE THE WINCH HAUL THE JEEP UP
WITH THE TWO PALS ABOARD, LEN BROUGHT THE POWER-DRIVEN WINCH INTO OPERATION--AND SLOWLY THE JEEP BEGAN TO DRAG ITSELF UP
KEEP YOUR FINGERS CROSSED. EVERYTHING DEPENDS UPON THE STRENGTH OF THE ROPE

THEIR LUCK HELD, AND AT LAST THEY REACHED THE TOP
PHEW! I'M GLAD THAT'S OVER
SAME HERE! NOW WE'VE TO GET DOWN THIS OTHER SIDE

THIS TIME IT MEANT MAKING THE WINCH LOWER THEM INCH BY INCH. BREATHLESSLY LEN CONTROLLED THE BRAKES AND ENGINE
HOW ARE YOU FEELING, CHUM?
LIKE A BLINKIN' MOUNTAIN GOAT. SHAN'T I BE GLAD WHEN THIS PART OF THE JOURNEY IS OVER!


THE PALS THOUGHT THAT ALL WAS GOING WELL. SUDDENLY, HOWEVER, TWO MEN APPEARED AT THE TOP OF THE SLOPE. GOMEZ AND SANTOS!
CARAMBA! WE HAVE CAUGHT UP WITH THEM--AND AT JUST THE RIGHT MOMENT! ONE SLASH WITH MY KNIFE, AND INSTEAD OF RESCUING GEORGE DALTON THEY WILL HURTLE TO THEIR DOOM

GOMEZ HACKED AT THE ROPE WHICH WAS FASTENED TO THE JEEP


AS THE JEEP SUDDENLY LURCHED FORWARD, DICK LOOKED BACK AND GAVE A YELL
THUNDER! IT'S GOMEZ--AND HE'S CUT THE ROPE!

DESPERATELY LEN GRIPPED THE WHEEL, STRIVING TO KEEP THE JEEP UNDER CONTROL
IF I CAN'T CORRECT THIS SKID, WE'VE HAD IT!

MISSING THE EDGE OF A PRECIPICE BY A HAIRSBREADTH, LEN SKILFULLY STEERED ON TO A NATURAL ARCH
WE'VE MADE IT! GOOD FOR YOU, LEN
WE'RE NOT OUT OF TROUBLE YET. THE GROUND DROPS SHARPLY AT THE OTHER SIDE
THEN CAME DISASTER!
ALTHOUGH THEY DID NOT KNOW IT, THE PALS HAD BEEN SEEN BY SOME STRANGE, WHITE-SKINNED TRIBESMEN WHO NOW CAME HURRYING ALONG TO INVESTIGATE. BOTH LEN AND DICK WERE FOUND TO BE STILL ALIVE -- BUT UNCONSCIOUS
CONSTRUCTING LITTERS, THE FRIENDLY NATIVES CARRIED THE PALS TO THEIR VILLAGE
WHEN LEN AND DICK CAME ROUND, THEY TRIED TO THANK THE NATIVES AND TO QUESTION THEM. BUT NEITHER COULD UNDERSTAND THE OTHERS' LANGUAGE
IT'S NO GOOD, LEN. EVEN IF THEY DO KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR BROTHER, THEY AREN'T ABLE TO TELL US. THE BEST THING WE CAN DO IS TO SEE IF OUR JEEP IS STILL IN ONE PIECE. AND THEN TO CARRY ON OUR SEARCH FOR GEORGE
BY MAKING SIGNS, LEN GOT THE NATIVES TO UNDERSTAND THAT HE AND DICK WISHED TO RETURN TO THEIR JEEP. THEY FOUND THE SPOT WHERE IT HAD CRASHED, BUT--
GOSH, LEN-- IT'S VANISHED!
AND THERE ARE ITS TYRE TRACKS! IT'S BEEN DRIVEN AWAY--AND YOU CAN BET YOUR BOOTS IT WAS GOMEZ WHO TOOK IT!
DETERMINED TO RECOVER THEIR JEEP, SO THAT THEY COULD CONTINUE THEIR SEARCH FOR LEN'S BROTHER, THE PALS GRIMLY TRAILED THE TYRE-TRACKS. ALL AT ONCE THEY CAME TO A JUNGLE CLEARING--AND HALTED IN AMAZEMENT
IT'S THE LOST TEMPLE OF THE SERPENT GOD! THIS WAS ONE OF THE PLACES GEORGE WAS SEARCHING FOR. WE MAY FIND A CLUE HERE

FILLED WITH HOPE, THEY ENTERED THE TEMPLE. THE NEXT MOMENT, BEN GAVE A GASP OF DELIGHT
WE'VE FOUND HIM AT LAST! IT'S MY BROTHER GEORGE!
LEN! YOU'VE COME TO MY RESCUE. GEE--I CAN HARDLY BELIEVE IT!

PAINFULLY GEORGE GASPED OUT HIS STORY. HE HAD BEEN WOUNDED EARLIER BY GOMEZ, WHO, LEARNING THAT THE TEMPLE CONTAINED GREAT TREASURE, HAD GONE TO SEEK SOME FORM OF TRANSPORT. HAVING NOW OBTAINED THE CHUMS' JEEP, GOMEZ HAD DRIVEN IT ALONG A SECRET PASSAGE THAT LED TO THE TREASURE HALL

THAT'S THE WAY THEY WENT. AT ALL COST YOU MUST STOP THEM. THE TREASURE IS SACRED TO THE NATIVES. IF ANY HARM COMES TO IT, THEY MAY KILL US ALL

THE PALS TORE ALONG THE PASSAGE--TO FIND GOMEZ AND SANTOS USING THE JEEP TO FORCE OPEN THE LOCKED DOOR OF THE TREASURE HALL
THAT'S DONE THE TRICK. NOW TO GO INSIDE AND LOAD UP
WE'LL BE ABLE TO CARRY AWAY ENOUGH GOLD TO MAKE US RICH FOR LIFE!

THEIR EYES ALIGHT WITH GREED, THE TWO CROOKS DROVE INTO THE HALL AND DARTED FORWARD. THEY DIDN'T SEE LEN AND DICK HEADING FOR THE JEEP!
THERE, SANTOS--GOLD, SILVER AND JEWELS WORTH A MILLION. AND NOTHING TO STOP US HELPING OURSELVES TO IT!

SILENTLY THE PALS SNATCHED UP THE RIFLES WHICH HAD BEEN LEFT IN THE JEEP
THE NEXT MOMENT ~
HANDS UP, YOU THIEVING THUGS!
CARAMBA! IT'S THOSE TWO BRITISHERS AGAIN!
GOMEZ GRASPED A HEAVY IDOL TO HURL AT THE PALS
THE IDOL, HOWEVER, FORMED THE END OF A LEVER WHICH CAUSED A FLAGSTONE TO SWING OPEN BENEATH THE TWO CROOKS!
CARAMBA! WE'VE BEEN TRICKED!
HELP!
GOSH! THEY'VE SPRUNG A BOOBY-TRAP BUILT TO PROTECT THE ALTAR FROM THIEVES!
LEN AND DICK WERE GAZING INTO THE BLACKNESS OF THE HOLE, REALISING THAT GOMEZ AND SANTOS HAD FALLEN TO THEIR DOOM, WHEN GEORGE ENTERED ~~ESCORTED BY NATIVES
SO THE TWO THUGS HAVE PAID THE PENALTY, EH? WELL, MEET THE CHIEF OF THE TRIBE. I OWE MY LIFE TO HIM, FOR HE AND HIS MEDICINE-MEN CARED FOR ME AFTER I HAD BEEN WOUNDED BY GOMEZ. NOW I SHALL BE ABLE TO RETURN WITH YOU IN THE JEEP
THE NEXT DAY, ACCOMPANIED BY A GUIDE WHO WOULD SHOW THEM A SAFE ROUTE, THE PALS STARTED THEIR JOURNEY BACK TO THE COAST. AND ON THEIR JEEP WERE PILED AS MANY PRICELESS PRESENTS AS THEY COULD CARRY
GOOD-BYE, CHIEF! WE'LL BE BACK AGAIN TO SEE YOU ONE DAY
AND THANKS FOR YOUR GIFTS. THEY'RE SMASHING!
THE END

SPOOK-HUNTER GERRY gets HIS GHOST

By Brian Mead

QUEER NOISES IN THE NIGHT

"YOU say this house is haunted? Well—" Gerry Fletcher gazed at the old, red-brick country mansion in front of him, with a frown. "I can only say I've never seen a house more likely to be haunted."

He spoke with conviction. For Gerry had seen many houses that were reputedly haunted. As an amateur but very successful ghost hunter, he had travelled all over Britain. And Daleton House, set in the heart of Surrey, might have come straight from a ghost tale.

It was a Tudor dwelling, surrounded by tall oak trees that threw shadows in the moonlight. On this night there was no breeze and nothing seemed to stir in or around the house. Not a bird called, or a leaf rustled. Life might have been standing still.

"Can you wonder I sent for you?"

James Butler, the owner of the house, escorting Gerry up the drive, looked round nervously. "This place is getting me down. I've only been here for two months—I thought it was a bargain when I took it. Now I'm sure I know why I got it so cheaply."

"You're certain these events can't be explained away?" asked Gerry. "You say you've heard ghostly footsteps and rappings—"

"Nearly every night," put in Alan, Mr. Butler's son, who was on Gerry's other side. Usually he was a cheery boy, Gerry thought, but now he looked pale and anxious. "At twelve o'clock and again at four o'clock there've been footsteps on the stairs. And when Dad and I have searched, we've found nothing."

"The rapping seems to echo through the whole house," Mr. Butler said with conviction. "And I've found things in the hall mysteriously broken. I tell you, Mr. Fletcher, if you can't lay this ghost, I'll have to give up the house."

"H'm! Well, I'll do my best," Gerry said slowly.

The whole thing was baffling.

He turned the iron ring in the front door and the great iron door swung open. Gerry stepped through into a darkened entrance hall, which was lined with suits of armour. In the gloom he saw pictures on the walls, old furniture, and a great oak staircase leading to a gallery.

"Look! The vase!"

Alan's sharp cry made Gerry jerk round.

Gerry felt the hair on the back of his neck rise.

Close to the door stood a table. On it was a large

It was No Ordinary Spectre that Haunted the Ancient Mansion—As Gerry Soon Found Out!

pottery vase. The vase was now moving—and there was no one near it!

As Gerry watched, the vase glided up—and up! Higher and higher it rose until it was far out of Gerry's reach.

Suddenly Gerry, the first one to pull himself together, yelled: "Quick, the lights—"

At the same moment the vase was flung through the air. It crashed against the rail of the gallery. With a clatter the pieces fell, leaving only the rim, which was suspended in mid-air for a moment, as if still held by that unseen hand. Then it disintegrated and the pieces tumbled to join the others.

The lights flashed on and Gerry found himself gazing up at an empty gallery, into empty air. There was nothing there!

"You see what I mean?" Slowly Mr. Butler came towards him, followed by a wide-eyed and anxious-looking Alan. "This is happening all the time! Now you can imagine how we feel. Mr. Fletcher, you've just got to lay the ghost, or—or—"

"But who knows? It might well be the sort that follows you around!" Alan said uneasily. "You can't lay *them*, can you, Mr. Fletcher?"

"No—at least, it's said you can't!" Gerry murmured. "But I'm not sure it is a ghost yet."

He stooped to place some fragments of vase in his handkerchief; a ghost-hunter had to be as careful as a detective about clues. He snapped open the folding magnifying-glass he always carried, and examined the fragments closely.

They suggested that the vase had been smashed normally. Plenty of fingerprints, of course—but then probably both Mr. Butler and Alan had handled the vase at some time.

Gerry remembered that the rim had hung in the air after the other pieces had fallen. Rather more intently he examined that. Then, abruptly, he shut his magnifying-glass and slipped the pieces of vase rim into his pocket.

"Is there anyone else in the house?" he asked. "Could anyone get in without your knowing? Have you had any offers to buy this place?"

Mr. Butler looked surprised, but he shook his head.

"Mine was the first offer to buy the place the agents had for ages—more fool me. And I haven't any staff at the moment; none will stay for long."

"There are no secret openings, either—worse luck," put in Alan. "I've been all over the plans and tested all the walls. I say, Mr. Fletcher, you can't think it's all a trick?"

"I don't believe in ghosts!" frowned Gerry.

Not only that, his examination of the vase had made him almost certain Mr. Butler was the victim of a trick. But—why? Had Mr. Butler some enemy?

There was only one chance of discovering the truth. Catch the person responsible.

Gerry looked at his watch.

"It's half past ten," he said. "I think we'd better shut up house and I'll lay a trap for this ghost."

"I'll lock all the doors!" Alan volunteered eagerly, and hurried off.

While he was away, Gerry got busy. He tied a thread across the top of the stairway, at just the height of a man's ankles; then he sprinkled grey powder on the step. If anyone came that way they would break the thread and leave footprints in the powder.

He repeated the process for all the other stairs, down to the foot of the flight.

"O.K.," he said, as Alan returned. "Now we'll stand guard."

Mr. Butler switched out the lights, and the three took up positions around the hall. Gerry made himself comfortable in the ingle-nook of the great fireplace, where he had a good view of hall and staircase.

Now the lights were out, all was very eerie. No one spoke, and the pictures and the armour gleamed like pale ghosts in the darkness. No wonder Mr. Butler thought of ghosts, reasoned Gerry. Who could fail to be affected by the atmosphere?

He wondered what he would discover. Could someone be playing ghost? But how did they get away with it?

Somewhere a clock chimed. Twelve o'clock! Any time now! Nearer a dog barked. Then, an owl hooted outside. Simultaneously, from the stairs—

Thump! Thump! Thump! Thump!

"The footsteps!" cried Mr. Butler sharply.

"Come on!" Gerry was out of the ingle-nook in a flash, racing for the light-switch.

Unfortunately, at the same moment Alan came to life, too. He darted forward. Just as Gerry reached for the switch, they collided.

With a gasp Gerry reeled one way and Alan the other. Gerry collided heavily with a suit of armour. It tottered. Just in time he dodged away as it collapsed. He grabbed for the light-switch.

Craaash!

Gerry hardly flinched as the crash of the armour woke the echoes. He was gazing towards the staircase. Once again he felt that prickling at the back of his neck.

There was—again—no sign of anyone or anything on the stairs or the gallery above. But something had climbed the stairs!

There, in the grey powder, were marks. On the first stair, on the third stair, on the fifth stair and so on to the top of the flight. Long, narrow marks, not two inches wide.

No human foot could have made them. What had climbed the stairs—and where had it vanished?

GERRY MEETS THE GHOST

SLOWLY Gerry went forward. At his side he heard Mr. Butler draw a deep breath.

"What—what was it?" the house-owner asked, his voice slightly unsteady.

"I don't know—" Gerry ran a hand through his hair. It wasn't his policy to admit he was baffled, neither did he admit there were such things as ghosts. But what had made those marks? "If only we could have got the lights on in time," he said ruefully.

"It's my fault!" Alan came up breathlessly behind him. "Mr. Fletcher, I'm awfully sorry—"

"It can't be helped," Gerry said swiftly. "But a moment earlier—"

He stopped. Swiftly he caught up the thread he had placed across the first stair. It was broken. And so was the thread on the third stair—

But ghosts didn't break threads, surely? Nor leave prints behind. There was another trick here!

"Quick!" Gerry said sharply. "If anyone—or anything—went upstairs, they're up there now."

He went up the stairs two at a time and, on the gallery, paused. He looked about. Then he started. There was a smear of grey powder on the polished floor, three feet away from the head of the stairs.

"Whatever it was came this way!" he exclaimed, as Mr. Butler and Alan joined him. "It must be in one of the rooms."

There were several leading off. Alan made for the first.

"This is mine!" He flung the door open. "I'll search."

He was down on his knees to peer under the bed in a flash.

"Nothing here!" he announced. 'What about the wardrobe?"

Gerry and Mr. Butler were already looking in that—the only likely hiding place in the room. That, too, was empty.

So was Mr. Butler's room and so were all the other rooms on that floor. And so, when they came to search, were the attics.

"Well, it's vanished, whatever it is," decided Mr. Butler at last, when they returned to the gallery. "I must say, I'll be glad when I see the last of this house. If it isn't haunted—"

"I've never known a ghost that left traces—in fact, I've never known a ghost yet," Gerry said, still unconvinced.

"But what was it, then?" Alan asked anxiously. "If—if it's anyone, where are they?"

"H'm! Well, of one thing we're certain," Gerry said stubbornly. "Whoever it was came up the stairs. You said the 'ghost' appears again at four o'clock? Well, this time I'm waiting here. The gallery is narrow and no one can get downstairs without pushing me out of the way. And just to make sure, I'll bring a flash-light camera."

"But what will happen to you if it is a ghost?" protested Alan.

"I've always wanted to meet a ghost," murmured Gerry.

But, despite what had happened, he was still certain he was not up against a ghost. Yet there remained that question: who was playing ghost and why? And where had they disappeared?

It was now nearly two o'clock. He persuaded Mr. Butler and Alan to go up to their rooms, and renewed his threads and powder on the stairs. Then he erected his camera on a tripod, at the top, already focused on the stairs for instant use, and waited by it.

Again all was quiet. Suddenly—

Tap-tap-tap-tap-tap-tap-tap!

A swift, vibrant tapping came from behind him. He whirled, peering down the dark, unlit gallery. What was that?

Tap-tap-tap-tap-tap-tap-tap!

It went on, the wall and floor seeming to shake under the sound. It was something like the rapping of a hammer on wood.

Tap-tap-tap-tap-tap!

"Mr. Fletcher!"

Despite himself, Gerry jumped as a figure appeared out of the darkness ahead of him. He drew a deep breath as he recognised Alan.

"Alan! What are you doing here? I thought—"

"Did you hear the rapping?" Alan asked breathlessly. "It's the ghost! I wondered—if we made a search—"

He broke off with a startled cry and seemed to stagger. Next moment, even as Gerry stared, something struck him in the ankles!

Automatically he operated his camera. A blaze of light flooded the scene, as Gerry tottered—and then fell down the stairs!

Gerry let out gasp after gasp as he thudded from one stair to another. Then—thump! He struck the floor in the hall.

His head cracked against the boards. Bright lights flashed before his eyes. As from a distance he heard another thump, like something falling after him. Then a shattering crash of glass, followed a second or two later by a milder crash at his side.

When, after a full thirty seconds, he struggled up, the lights were blazing in the hall. Alan and Mr. Butler were standing at his side and there was a great, gaping hole in the hall window!

"Mr. Fletcher, are you all right?" cried Mr. Butler. "What on earth happened?"

"I think," Gerry said, shaking his head, "I had a brush with your ghost, Mr. Butler. But I got its photograph this time."

"It won't be any use, Mr. Fletcher," Alan said dolefully.

"Eh? Why?"

Alan pointed, and Gerry, gazing down, almost groaned aloud. His flash-light camera was in pieces by his side. Once again the "ghost" had beaten him.

"Just go and do that," Gerry said firmly.

Alan hurried away and Mr. Butler gazed at him in bewilderment.

"Mr. Fletcher, if you could tell me what you intend to do now—"

"I think," Gerry said thoughtfully, "we can lay your ghost, Mr. Fletcher. We're going to set a trap for him."

"What?" Mr. Fletcher stared.

"But first I want some meat," Gerry smiled.

He refused to say anything more, and when he and Mr. Butler returned to the hall, Gerry had half

WHAT MR. BUTLER SAW

"THIS settles it!" Mr. Butler's voice was full of conviction. "Alan and I are getting out of this place first thing in the morning. I'm not going to share the house with an unfriendly ghost—"

"But if it comes with us—" began Alan.

Gerry intervened quickly, struggling to his feet. He was putting the events into place in his mind now.

"Alan, tell me!" he exclaimed. "How did my camera come to get smashed?"

"I don't really know." Alan blinked. "You must have taken the camera with you, or the ghost knocked it down."

"I see—" murmured Gerry.

The "ghost," he knew, had followed him down the stairs. It had jumped down beside him, making that thump he had heard.

Gerry thought he saw it all now. He went over to the shattered window.

Through his magnifying-glass he examined it. And for the first time a smile touched his lips—an almost sympathetic smile.

There was a faint stain on one of the jagged edges of glass and, clinging to another was a white, thread-like strand. Gerry touched it with his finger.

He straightened, gazing towards Mr. Butler and Alan, who were watching him, perplexed.

"Alan will you go and see all the doors are locked and that no one can get in?"

"Sure But why?—"

Ruefully Gerry sat up at the foot of the stairs down which the ghost had pushed him. He'd come to the house to "lay the ghost"—but it had almost laid him out!

a pound of ham, wrapped in paper, in his pocket.

Alan reported that all the doors were locked. He seemed uneasy, but when Mr. Butler looked at Gerry, Gerry still did not explain.

His plan might not work if the wrong person got to hear. And he knew the thing responsible for the ghostly alarms was still in the house.

"If you will go to bed, I'll do the rest," Gerry said calmly. "And I promise you we'll have the ghost before five o'clock."

They went upstairs, still puzzled. Gerry made his way to the back door. There he was mysteriously busy.

When he climbed the stairs to the first floor, he was chuckling.

He noticed that Mr. Butler's door was partly open

—as they had arranged. Then, in the shadows of the gallery, he waited.

Not for long!

All at once there came a thump on the stairs!

The thump was followed by another—and another. Three, four, five, six—they had reached the top of the stairs!

From Alan's room came a scuffle of alarm. Then—

Tap-tap-tap-tap-tap-tap!

The rapping again!

"Mr. Butler!" Gerry cried.

And, leaping forward, he threw open the door of Alan's room.

He saw Alan standing there in the centre of the room, an expression of startled dismay on his face. And there, at his side, its tail beating a rapid, pleased tattoo on the wall was—a large mongrel dog!

"What on earth!—" Mr. Butler, behind Gerry, stared in amazement.

Gerry smiled grimly.

"There's your ghost, Mr. Butler," he said, pointing to the dog. "You can see how you got the rapping—its tail bumping against the wall. And he made the footprints and steps as he jumped upstairs. Give me your paw, boy."

He went down on his knees beside the dog. The dog, for all its size, was a friendly animal and let him take a paw.

Gerry pointed to the pad.

"My footprint powder! See it between the toes? I imagine this was your doing, Alan. You left the back door open for the dog to enter, and he was hidden under your bed when we searched. You, of course, pretended not to see him."

Alan dropped a hand to the dog's head. He looked defiant.

"Yes, it's true. But how did you guess?"

"The vase gave me the first clue," Gerry said quietly. "You tied cotton round it, and looped the cotton over a beam in the hall. When you pulled the cotton the vase rose in the air. Correct? When the vase broke, the cotton came away, but it held the rim together for a moment and left fibres clinging to the china. I saw them and really knew it was a trick."

"But how did you suspect Alan?" Mr. Butler asked.

"By the way my camera fell *after* the supposed ghost had jumped down beside me. Someone threw my camera down the stairs. And who else was on the gallery except Alan? Yet when I questioned him, he said I'd taken the camera with me when I fell. That was a bad slip."

Mr. Butler drew a deep breath.

"Alan." Sternly he turned to his son. "I want a full explanation as to why you did this. And I want nothing held back. Now—"

"Well—" Alan bit his lip, his face downcast. "There's nothing to hold back."

"It was because you said I couldn't have a dog, because I couldn't look after it properly!" he burst out. "I wanted one. So I bought Chum and let him in every night to give him food. Then I sent him back to the old barn over in Long Meadow. I had to pretend there was a ghost here, so as to account for the noise Chum and I made when I let him in and out. But I didn't mean you to be hurt, Mr. Fletcher."

"I know," Gerry said frankly. "I imagine you came out to me tonight to stop me getting into Chum's way, but didn't make it. Chum got panicky, knocked me down and leapt through the window."

He patted the dog sympathetically.

"He cut himself and left a hair behind. I lured him here with a trail of ham because I guessed, being hurt, he'd wait around for help, but wouldn't come in unless called. You've trained him well, Alan."

Alan flushed.

"Yes, but—" He blinked rapidly. "I suppose I'll have to get rid of him now and I don't want to—"

"I don't care what you want to do!" Mr. Butler broke in. "This is really the end! You might have cost us our home, through your foolish disregard of my orders. Tomorrow that dog goes. And I've a good mind to pack you off to some boarding school!"

"Didn't you ever want a pet?" Gerry asked gently.

"Eh? What? Well, yes. I remember, it was white mice with me, and when they got loose—" He pulled himself up. "What's that got to do with it?"

"I was thinking," said Gerry. "I know I've no right to say so, but, seeing everything's ended satisfactorily, don't you think Alan could keep his dog? He's proved he can look after one and train it. I know he's caused us a lot of trouble," he added hastily, as Mr. Butler made to speak—"but I'm willing to forget—"

Mr. Butler rubbed his chin. He gazed at Alan, then at the dog, and then back at Gerry.

"I can only say, Mr. Fletcher, you are being very generous," he said slowly. "I think, then—yes," he decided. "You can keep your dog, Alan. But, remember, no more tricks."

"Gosh! Of course not! Thanks!" Alan cried, beaming. "And, Mr. Fletcher—you're a sport! If I hear of any more hauntings, I'll let you know!"

"As long," stipulated Gerry, with a grin, "as the haunting isn't done by someone's pet elephant!"

The UNMASKING of the TIMBER-CAMP TRAITOR

WHO WRECKED THE FLUME?

By George Ireland

"WE'VE got to get all the trees in the valley felled before the river breaks up, Top. If we don't, the company goes bust."

There was concern on Top Thomson's face as he listened to his friend, Gregg Greerson. Gregg ran a small lumber company which was then working in a valley in the Kusuchi district of Canada. The trees that grew there were Douglas firs, so unusually tall and straight that they were very valuable.

Top, a young timber expert, with his Indian pal, Deerhorn, had come to the timber camp to visit his friend.

"It's like this, Top," Gregg explained. "I got this concession for the valley just one jump ahead of another timber company. I hadn't the cash to pay for the concession, but I got a loan. The loan falls due in just one month's time. I'll be able to pay it off all right if I can get my timber down the river with the first flood of the break-up. If I miss the break-up, then my logs will be stranded here, and I'll be bankrupt."

Top nodded in understanding. When the frozen Kusuchi River, which ran past the end of the valley, broke up after the winter, there would be plenty of water in it. But after the first few days the water level would drop. There might not be enough to carry the logs over the shallows and rapids. The timber would have to wait until the next floods, and they might not come for months.

"Still," said Top, "even if you lose a little time, once you've got your trees felled they're yours all right. You'll be able to pay off the loan sooner or later."

Gregg shook his head.

"There's a clause in the concession," he said bitterly, "that says that if I can't settle the loan on the day repayment falls due, then timber already felled becomes the ownership of the land company. In other words, if I don't get my timber out on time I lose it. And the next contractor will get the benefit of my work."

"And the next contractor will be the other company you mentioned," Top murmured. "You're certainly in a jam. All the same you should be able to get the valley felled out all right. There's still a fortnight to go before the break-up."

Gregg shrugged.

"We should be able to get it out all right," he answered. "But the way things have been running

It was a Race Against Time to Free the Backwoods Log-Jam!

we're not going to. Trouble, trouble, trouble, that's all I've been getting."

As if to confirm his words there was a rush of heavy feet from outside the hut. A squat, heavy-built man clattered into the logging office.

"The flume!" he gasped. "It's smashed! A tree crashed on top of it and carried away the main section."

Gregg went pale as he rose to his feet.

"Now we're really bust," he gritted. "With the flume gone, we won't be able to bring the logs down from the upper part of the valley at all. O.k., Hoskins, show me what happened."

Top and Deerhorn followed a little way behind Gregg and Hoskins. Hoskins—Roughhouse Hoskins as he was known—was the foreman of Gregg's company. He had joined the firm just before they came to the valley. The previous foreman had been injured and Hoskins had got the job. He was a tough driver of men, but he seemed to know his way around.

After a ten minute walk up the steep valley side, they came to the point where the flume—a kind of wooden chute designed to carry the logs down the hill to the river—was carried over a little dip in the valley side. For about fifty feet the flume had bridged the dip, supported on massive pillars made from solid tree trunks.

Now the thick planks of the flume were shattered, and a twenty foot gap had been cut through the bridge. The cause was plain. A huge Douglas fir lay on the ground among the wreckage. Its stump was well up hill from the flume. Top strolled towards the stump and examined it. It was easy to see why it had been felled. Because it was isolated, it was the biggest tree in the valley.

Gregg was still looking dolefully at the wreckage when Top returned. "There it is," Gregg shrugged. "Well, I guess this is about the end for me. We'll not mend that flume inside a week. And that won't leave us time to clear the upper half of the valley of trees. Though how any feller could be so careless as to let a log fall on the flume, I don't know."

"I don't think he was careless," Top said softly.

"What do you mean?" Gregg gasped. "If he wasn't careless how did the accident happen."

"It was no accident," Top said grimly. "That tree was felled so that it would smash the flume. There's a traitor in your camp!"

THE ICE RUNWAY!

TOP led Gregg to the stump of the fir that had caused the damage.

"Any axeman could have made that tree fall uphill," he said. "You know that, Gregg. It's just a question of the direction of the cut."

"I know," Gregg agreed. "You undercut on the side you want to fell the tree, then do your main cut on the other side. Well?"

Top pointed to the stump.

"It's been cut through half way on the lower side. A big wedge has been taken out and the bark stuck back. The tree was bound to fall downhill."

Gregg's face darkened with anger.

"I'll find the feller who worked on that tree today—and make him talk."

Top shook his head.

"That feller wasn't to blame. Look at this. The saw cut at this side is fresher than the other. It was made maybe two or three days ago."

He pulled at the bark of the tree. Suddenly a big chunk came away.

"I'll tell you what happened. Someone stripped off the bark and cut halfway, taking out a big wedge. He stuck the wedge back in again, through the trunk, and then glued the bark on, hiding the cut. When one of today's timbermen came along and made his first cut, the edge came loose and the whole tree toppled over."

"But who the heck would want to smash the flume, and so ruin me?" Gregg gasped. "My men have been with me for years. I'd trust them with my life."

"I don't know," Top answered, "but there's big money for the rival timber company if you don't get your logs out on time. I reckon they've bribed one of your men to wreck the flume."

As Top spoke they were joined by Roughhouse Hoskins, the foreman. Quickly Gregg explained what had been discovered. The foreman's face went dark with anger and his powerful fists knotted.

"Jest wait till I find who done it," he growled, "I'll tear them into little pieces. The dirty, lowdown—"

The others were hardly listening. Gregg was looking hopelessly down at the wreckage of the flume. Top was gazing up the slope. Suddenly he broke away from the others and darted up the incline. A moment later he was calling down to Gregg. The timber boss puffed up the slope and found Top at the side of a frozen stream.

"There you are," Top grinned. "Slide your logs down here. This stream runs down the valley side, and hits the river just a little bit upstream of where your flume ends."

"Yeah, but how about the corners?" growled Hoskins, who had followed Gregg up the slope. "They'll be too sharp to let the logs round. They'll jam and we'll be worse off than ever."

"There's no bad corners from here on down," Top snapped. "I know this stream well. Many a fish I've taken from it. All you need to do is to swing the broken end of the flume up this way a piece and you've got a new flume ready made."

Gregg thumped Top on the back.

"By hokey, that's it," he whooped. "I guess this might just about save our bacon. You get the men to shifting the flume, Hoskins. I'll go on up the valley and get them started to work again."

Hoskins was still shaking his head doubtfully and muttering that he didn't think it would work when Top and Deerhorn left. But as they strolled down to the camp they heard the sound of hammers and the creaking of heavy timbers. The flume was being shifted.

For the rest of that day and the next day the clatter of axes and the buzz of bucksaws biting into timber rang up and down the valley. The tall trees crashed to the ground. Top and Deerhorn lent a hand everywhere, swinging axes or wielding saws, or driving the powerful caterpillar tractors that hauled the logs to the flume.

Once or twice Top halted to gaze at the sky. He sniffed at the air and a worried frown puckered his brow. He sensed that the weather was beginning to change.

"It looks like an early break-up of the river's ice," he muttered. "If we get that, then Gregg's going to be ruined, for there's still more than half the logs to be got down to the river. We can't afford another hold-up."

He set to swiftly with his axe, determined that he at least would do nothing to slow the clearing of the valley. He still had no clue as to who had been responsible for the smashing of the flume.

The following morning he was sitting at breakfast with Gregg and Deerhorn when there was a sudden crashing noise.

"The river's starting to go," he gasped as he flung himself from the cookhouse. "The ice is breaking-up."

But the ice on the river was still smooth and solid when they reached it. Frowning, he peered about. Then he realised that something was missing. Night and day the steady thud-thud-thud of logs running down the flume and crashing on to the river ice had echoed through the wood. Now that sound had stopped.

"The flume!" Top gasped. "Something's choked the flume."

Gregg and Deerhorn were already running towards him when he turned and started to sprint for the lower end of the flume. He could see nothing wrong there, and he turned and started to make his way up the icy surface of the flume channel.

Gregg shouted at him to come back, but Top ignored the warning. Slipping and sliding he clawed his way upward. He came to a point where the flume turned. He was still in the stream, bed part of the flume, not the planked channel. As he turned the corner he halted.

Wedged across the channel was a long log. Piled behind it were dozens of others in a swiftly rising mass. And at the side of the log jam was Rough-house Hoskins.

The foreman did not see Top at first. The young timberman saw the foreman clambering up from the foot of the jam.

Hoskins swung round as he heard Top scrambling up the flume. For a second there was blind hatred in his eyes. Then he forced a sort of smile.

"I told yuh that flume would never work," he called. "Now we got ourselves some real trouble. It'll take days to clear that jam."

"I don't think so," Top snapped. "If we act quickly we can clear it at once."

With a long, stout branch he started to lever at the first log that had jammed. If it could be got moving the whole jumble of logs would shift. The branch bent as Top threw his whole strength on it. The key log started to lift slightly.

Using every ounce of his strength, Top Thomson strained to hold back the massive jumble of logs. Desperately he called for help. But the burly lumberjack on the bank stayed put—and looked on with a mocking sneer!

"Quick!" Top grunted. "Slip another branch in behind it and take the strain while I shift my branch."

Hoskins did as Top suggested. The log moved farther out from the bank. Now it was Hoskin's turn to move his lever while Top took the strain.

The whole mass of logs that was held by the key log was rumbling and grinding now. Only the branch and Top's strength held them in position.

"Hurry!" Top gasped. "I can't hold it much longer."

There was no answer from Hoskins. Twisting his head round, Top saw that the foreman had turned and was scrambling up the side of the flume. He had abandoned the young timberman.

The whole mass of logs was trembling now. Top's strength held it in position. If he let go his branch, the key log would jump up and the logs would come tumbling down on top of him. There would be no time for him to jump clear.

Top felt his muscles quivering as the sheer weight of the logs slowly tore the branch from his grasp. The heavy trees were about to smash down on the young timberman!

A "GHOST" K.O.'D HIM

FOR a moment before he lost his grip, Top looked upward. He saw a jeering smile on Roughhouse Hoskin's face. He knew that the foreman intended he should die. He knew now who was behind the smashing of the flume and who had caused the log jam. Hoskins!

Then, with a roar, the jam broke up. Hundreds of tons of logs started to slide towards Top.

There was no hope of dodging them, no chance of reaching the top of the flume's sides. Top saw only one chance of life.

As the first log hurtled at him, he sprang towards it and swung himself on to it. The other logs pounded and jerked crazily, and Top felt himself carried swiftly down the steep bed of the stream.

Logs jarred against him as they were swept downwards. Top rose first to hands and knees and then to his feet. Balancing precariously on the sliding log, he hurtled onwards. But by standing erect he was able to dodge the other logs and save himself from being crushed.

Faster and faster grew his speed. Now a new danger threatened. Ahead lay the frozen river. The log would crash down on to it. Top knew that he was unlikely to be able to keep his balance after the shock. If he fell from the log he would be crushed under the weight of those behind.

"I've got to get off before I hit the river," he decided.

The chance came moments later. A tree overhung the bed of the stream and one branch swept so low that Top was able to spring upwards and catch it. As he hauled himself to safety, he saw the deadly logs race beneath him.

"And now to settle with that traitor Hoskins," he muttered, as he scrambled along the branch and lowered himself to the ground.

Hoskins had left the place where the flume had jammed. He was sure that Top was dead by now.

"He's got a surprise coming," Top thought grimly, following the foreman's tracks down towards the lumber camp.

As he hurried down the valley side, he ran into Gregg and Deerhorn. They gaped at him as if he was a ghost.

"Hoskins said you'd been killed," Gregg gasped.

There was a beam on Deerhorn's face as he remarked: "I tell him Top Thomson not so easy to kill."

Top said nothing. But he hurried down towards the camp with the others at his heels.

Hoskins was in the little blacksmith's shop, grinding the blade of an axe when Top found him. For a moment the foreman's face paled as he saw the young timberman.

Then he realised it was no ghost that stood before him.

In a flash he snatched up the axe he had been grinding and in the same movement hurled it at Top.

Thlongk!

Top ducked under the whirling blade which quivered into the wall of the rough shack.

Then Roughhouse Hoskins was on him.

In the first breathless moments Top discovered how the foreman had earned his nickname. There was no foul blow he did not attempt. He kicked, scratched, and punched all at once, trying to wear Top down by the sheer ferocity of his attack.

Under the torrent of blows Top fell back, guarding himself as well as he could. He felt the wall behind him. Hoskins gave a grunt of triumph as he closed in.

Top's fists pounded like pistons, but Hoskins had lowered his bullet-like head and the young timberman's blows landed harmlessly on the top of his skull.

Crash!

Top felt his senses swim as the foreman's head jolted up suddenly beneath his jaw. Then a hail of short arm jabs racked Top's lean body. Desperately he brought his arms down, trying to muffle the blows.

Hoskins shook him off and pushed him back against the wall. There was a gleam of triumph in his eyes as he measured up the distance for a full-blooded swing.

Top knew he had no time to dodge. Even if he did, it would only give him a moment's respite. A shadow above him caught his eye. It was the handle of the axe Hoskins had thrown.

Quick as a flash Top's hands shot up to grasp the axe. He threw all his weight on it and as Hoskins launched his punch, Top's legs flung up and outwards.

Zonk!

Hoskins was lifted right off the floor by Top's legs. When he landed, it was head-first. He did not stir.

Only then did Top realise he was not alone. Gathered at the door were close on a dozen timbermen, with Gregg and Deerhorn now vainly trying to force their way through them.

"Roughhouse Hoskins knocked out!" gasped one of the men. "Now I guess I've seen everything."

At last Gregg broke through.

"Are you all right, Top?" he gasped. "What's it all about? What happened?"

Top said nothing. Instead, he stooped over Hoskins. The man's shirt had been ripped in the fight. From the pocket a letter fluttered out. Top picked it up and handed it silently to Gregg.

With Top balanced precariously on it, the leading log hurtled along at terrific speed for a frozen lake. And behind it came scores of other logs. The jam had been freed—but what would happen to the young lumberman?

It bore the address of the rival timber company, and it contained instructions to Hoskins to hamper Gregg Greerson as much as possible. For his treachery Hoskins was to be paid a thousand dollars.

Gregg's lip curled in disgust and he made as if to tear the letter up.

Top halted him.

"Don't destroy it," he said, his face grim. "People who stoop to low-down treachery to make money deserve all they get. Send that letter to the Mounties. Then you can be sure you'll have no more trouble with the rival firm."

For the rest of the week the whine of saws and the clatter of axes sounded night and day through the valley. The great logs hurtled down the flume to crash and scatter on the ice. The ice grew thinner. There came a day when one log, instead of bouncing clear, smashed a hole clean through the ice. Gregg Greerson wore a worried frown.

"Any time the break-up's coming," he said to Top, "and there's still logs to come."

His men redoubled their efforts. A constant stream of mighty trunks came roaring down the flume. Water began to spread out over the ice. The logs were floating.

Gregg was standing at the bottom of the flume, counting the logs as they came down. He glanced upwards as he heard a shout. He gasped.

On the log that was shooting down the flume, Top Thomson was balancing. As the log shot past, Top leapt to the bank.

"That's it," he chuckled. "The one we've been waiting for. That's the last log."

He had hardly spoken when from upstream there came a muttering rumble that grew swiftly to a roar. A white-crested wall of water came rushing down the mighty river.

"The break-up," Gregg gasped. "It's come. But not in time to harm us. Thanks to you, Top, the valley will be cleared of logs—and my debt will be cleared too. Top Thomson, you're a great guy!"

PICTURE PARADE of FACTS from NEAR and FAR

In a London public house there are nearly 6,000 pennies balanced on a glass pint mug. They weigh over 1 cwt., and are worth about £5. The money is contributed by customers, and when the coins reach the ceiling they'll all be handed over to a children's hospital.

Water sellers are a common sight in the streets of Morocco. The weather becomes so hot that they do a roaring trade, serving cool drinks in brass cups. A bell is rung to let people know where to come to quench their thirst.

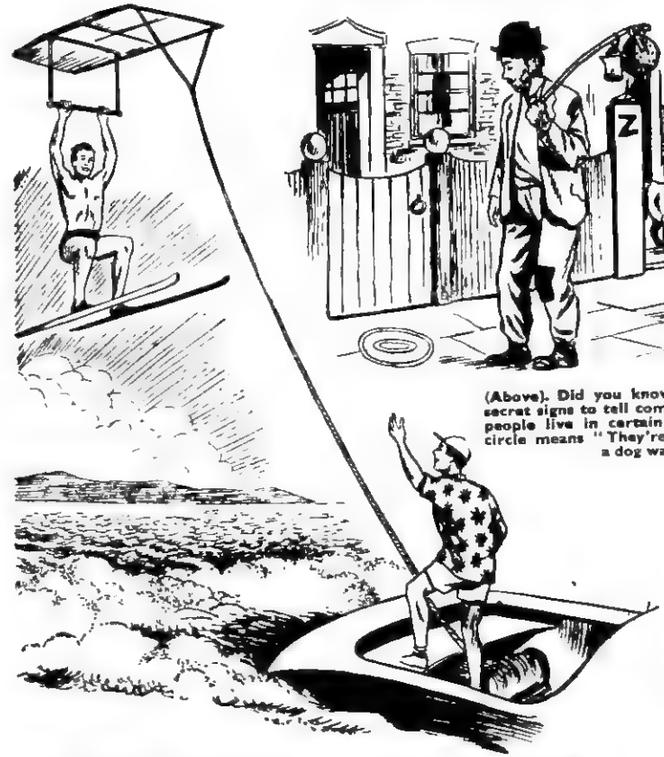
A man at Capetown had never read a newspaper for years. When cycling to work one morning, a paper blew up from the road, wound itself round his head, and caused him to fall over. He picked up the paper—and spotted his name in it. He then read that he was being looked for, as he had inherited some property in Italy.

While a football match was in progress between two fire brigade teams at Liverpool, a cry of "FIRE!" rang out. The game stopped abruptly—and everyone looked for the fire. It was in a player's pocket, where a box of matches had burst into flames!

As a treat for a Hereford lady who was celebrating her 102nd birthday, the cast of the pantomime Aladdin put on a special performance for her in the street in front of her house. Although not in the original story, a pair of trick cyclists refused to be left out!

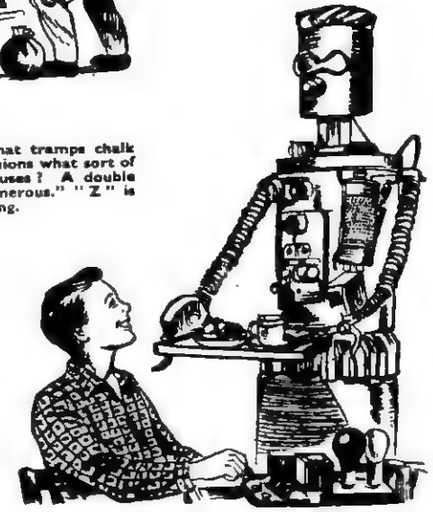
(Above). Diamond smuggling is one of the world's most highly organised crimes. It has been discovered that gangs possess lorries containing radar and radio apparatus to detect patrol boats; and frogmen swim out to smugglers' fishing vessels to hand over bags of gems.

(Above). Despite the severe climate in the Far North, Eskimoes have a grand sense of fun. At Nome, in Alaska, they enjoy themselves by tossing one another in blankets.



This is the sort of thrill to be seen off the coast of California. A water skier holds on to a special kite, and, as he is towed along, it takes him high into the air.

(Above). Did you know that tramps chalk secret signs to tell companions what sort of people live in certain houses? A double circle means "They're generous." "Z" is a dog warning.



The "waiter" shown here is a robot made by a boy in the United States. He operates a control panel, and the mechanical man picks things up and carries them around!

The SEA-BED TREASURE-SEEKERS

By Peter Glassford

Savage Sharks Guarded a Pirate's Loot—and Diving Dare-Devils Defied Them!

FIVE FATHOMS DOWN

DON CRAIG'S face was bright with excitement as his head broke the surface of the smooth lagoon. Swiftly he hauled himself into the motor boat and pulled off his huge goggles.

"This is it," he gasped, "drop the anchor, Micky."

Micky Burton darted forward to the bows of the boat and threw the anchor over the side. Then he hurried back to his pal.

"About five fathoms down," Don gasped, "there's a coral bank. On the top of it there's the outline of an ancient rowing boat—the type they used on the island three hundred years ago. The coral bank isn't much bigger than the boat. That's why no one has found it before."

Micky grinned.

"Let's hope it's the right boat. Boy, can you just see Uncle Jason's face if he finds we need not leave the island after all!"

Don and Micky had been brought up by their guardian, whom they called "Uncle Jason," a trader in the Andaman Islands, which lie in the Bay of Bengal. The islands had been passing through a lean period and many of the trader's customers could not pay their bills. This meant that Uncle Jason himself could not pay his own bills.

Because of this he had decided to give up and go to India, where he would take a job until things improved in the islands. The boys would have to go with him and work as clerks in some fusty store or office. They hated the prospect. They wanted to stay in the islands and help their guardian on his trading expeditions. But without money he could not stay.

One hope remained. The treasure of Josiah Pengilly. Pengilly had been a pirate some three hundred years before. There was a legend in the island that, after a raid, Pengilly had been rowing alone out to his ship with two great gold vases as his loot. In a sudden squall his boat had struck a reef and had sunk—together with the pirate.

Many a search had been made along the reefs surrounding the island, but no one had ever found the treasure.

Off and on Don and Micky had been hunting for the lost treasure for two years. But it was only

when they got some underwater fishing gear—rubber flippers for their feet and big goggles—that they were able to make a thorough survey of the lagoon. Both were expert swimmers, but the new gear made it easier to stay down longer and to make a more thorough search.

Now it seemed that there was a chance of success at last.

Filled with excitement, Micky pulled on his goggles and flippers.

"I'll go down and have a dekko!" he exclaimed. "That old rowing-boat might contain the lost treasure of Pengilly the pirate."

Neatly he dived over the side. Don watched his pal's body go down into the depths until it was swallowed up by the shadow of the boat. Suddenly Don stiffened in alarm.

Another shadow had appeared beyond the boat—it was swimming on Micky's trail.

There was no mistaking that long, sinister shade. It was a shark!

Not suspecting it, Micky would be at its mercy!

Don made up his mind in a split second. Springing to the boat's gunwale he dived cleanly into the water. His goggles allowed him to see well down into the depths. The shark was about ten feet beneath him. And beneath the shark he could see Micky. His pal still did not suspect the presence of that deadly stranger.

Flippers flailing the water, Don drove himself swiftly downward, in pursuit of the shark.

Fast though he swam, it seemed for long moments that he would not be in time. The shark was so close to Micky that it almost blotted him out of Don's vision.

With a last despairing effort, Don reached out and grabbed. His fingers rasped on the sandpaper-like skin of the shark's tail. With all his strength he clutched at the tail. For a moment nothing happened.

Then the shark realised that something was holding it. Its whole lithe body lashed sideways to free itself. Don felt himself flung through the water.

Grimly he held on, for as soon as he let go he would be at the shark's mercy. While he held that tail, the shark could not reach him with its jaws.

Don saw Micky swing round. Now the other boy saw his danger. He started to swim forward to Don's assistance. The shark turned towards him and he had to swim upwards to dodge its jaws.

Now the shark made a tremendous effort and whipped its body into a hoop. The vast, tooth-fringed jaws lunged towards Don, who saw only one chance of escape.

As the jaws neared him, he swung his whole strength against the shark's tail. The tail was forced into the jaws!

As soon as they felt something solid between them, the jaws snapped shut. The shark had seized its own tail!

At the same moment, Don released his grip and swam upwards. He was safe now, he knew. Once a shark bites, it does not let go. In the shark's simple brain there would be two separate ideas. One was that something was attacking it, biting its tail. The other was that in its jaws it had something to bite. It would not realise that it was biting itself. It would hold on indefinitely.

Breathless, Don reached the surface and hauled himself into the boat.

"Thanks," Micky grinned, as he pulled himself in over the other side. "I'd have been finished if you hadn't taken a hand—or a tail."

There was excitement in his eyes as he went on.

"It's certainly a rowing-boat buried down there. It's been pretty well broken up, but that should make it all the easier to get the gold vases—if it's the right boat! As soon as we've had a breather we can get started."

"Not today we can't," said Don grimly, "look there."

The shark was plainly visible about ten feet down. It was still biting its own tail. But now it was no longer alone!

Half a dozen lean, grey shapes circled round the wounded shark. They had been attracted by the smell of blood from the bitten tail. Now they turned on their comrade and the water was clouded with blood as they ripped it to pieces. Now that they had tasted blood they would attack anything that moved down there.

To go into that water was certain death!

DON'S "DIVING BELL"

THE pals waited in the hope that once the wounded shark had been eaten, the other sharks would go away. But even when the disturbance in the water had died away, the sinister shapes remained, floating easily just above the sunken reef.

"One thing's sure," said Don, "I'm not going down among that bunch, not for a hundred gold vases."

"Me neither," Micky agreed. "They've tasted blood. They'll go for anything in the water."

There was no point in waiting any longer. It might be hours before the sharks decided to move. Don dropped a buoy to mark the spot. Then they heaved in the anchor and headed for the shore. Before they reached it, they halted the boat again and dived over into the shallow water to spear a few of the big, striped muttonhead and parrot fish.

They did not go out again to the reef that day. But the following afternoon they took the launch again and anchored beside their buoy. Once again

Micky was first into the water. But he had hardly dived when he practically threw himself back into the boat.

There was a splash as a massive head broke the water right at his heels. For a moment the two boys looked right down the throat of the biggest shark they had ever seen.

"The pack of sharks is still there," Micky gasped. "I saw them as soon as I dived. They're lying right above the wreck."

Glumly they headed for the shore. It might be days before the sharks decided to move on.

"We'll just have to wait," Don said as the boat nudged the jetty. "The gold vases have been there for three hundred years. Another day or two isn't going to harm them. We've got plenty of time."

In this he was wrong. They were met at the jetty by their guardian, Uncle Jason.

"Better go and get packing, boys," he said. "I've just had word that the mission steamer is calling in two days from now. You're going on it."

They protested; Uncle Jason was firm.

When they were alone again, the boys were close to despair.

"If it wasn't for those sharks," groaned Don, "we'd have had that gold up long ago. Then Uncle Jason wouldn't talk about sending us away. There would be enough money to keep us all. I hate sharks."

"There's always a chance they'll go away," said Micky, not very hopefully. "Or how would it be if we were to put ground bait some distance away from them and attract them from the wreck?"

Don shook his head.

"There's too many of them. Now if we had a diving bell so they couldn't get at us. Or if—"

He broke off suddenly; his eyes lit up.

"A diving bell so they couldn't get at us," he repeated. "That's it, Micky!"

"But there isn't a diving bell on the island!" Micky protested.

"I don't mean a diving bell, exactly," Don insisted. "But suppose we were to build a sort of open-ended bamboo cage that reached right down to the lagoon bottom. It would keep the sharks out and we could dive down inside it to the wreck."

Micky had been frowning. As he listened to Don's idea his face lit up.

"That's it!" he gasped. "It would work all right. Come on, we'll go to the bamboo grove right away."

It proved to be a longer job than either of them had expected. For hours they hacked at the tough bamboos with long machetes. The poles had to be at least thirty feet long so that they would reach from the bottom to the surface. And they needed enough to make a sort of cage ten feet wide.

The cage was open at each end so that when it rested on the bottom the pals could work on the wreck. At the top it was open to let them in. Darkness covered the island before Don and Micky had finished and tested all the lashings that held the straight uprights to the curved hoops.

"I'd like to see a shark getting through that lot," Don grinned.

"I wouldn't," Micky laughed, "not if I was inside it, anyway. Roll on morning when we'll put it to the test!"

It was difficult to get away in the morning, for Uncle Jason wanted them to continue with their packing. But at last they were able to slip away. They took the launch to the place where they had left the bamboo cage.

Towing the cage behind them, they set out for the wreck. The light bamboo floated easily. In the launch they had bits of old iron and rocks to tie to the lower end of the cage, so as to make it sink.

When they anchored at last they busied themselves with preparing and sinking the cage.

"Careful you don't trap one of the sharks inside it," Micky grinned.

But there was no danger of that. As the cage dropped downward, bubbles of air broke away from it. These frightened the sharks who came nosing towards the cage. They swirled off a little way.

Micky was the first to be ready. He plunged into the cage as soon as it was stationary on the bottom. Down he went through the clear green water towards the weeds that waved about the wreck.

The weeds covered everything to such an extent that the first thing to be done was to cut them away.

With his knife Micky started to hack at the weeds. But he had been down already for more than half a minute. Soon he felt the blood pounding in his veins. It was time to surface for air.

As he let himself rise, he saw two of the sharks swim towards him. He felt a moment's panic before he remembered the barrier of bamboos which protected him.

He grinned as he saw the two sharks bump into the framework. The bamboos held. Mystified, the sharks backed off and tried again. Again they hit the bamboo and recoiled.

When he reached the surface, Micky explained to Don about the weeds. Clearing them would have to be the first task.

They set to work, taking it in turns to dive down, hack away a bundle of weed, and push it out through the bars of the cage.

It was a slow job, since not only did they have to rise for breath after every bout of work, but also they

were hampered by the weight of water on their limbs which made every movement an effort.

Yet gradually they cleared the weed away from the bottom of the cage. The coral-encrusted framework of the wreck began to show more clearly.

It had been a big boat, high at the bow and stern, as was the fashion in Pengilly the pirate's day. Most of the outer planking had gone, as had the upper parts of the ribs. But when they got the weeds shifted, the sand drifted over the floor of the wreck—covering the cage-weights as well.

And yet there were quite a few mysterious coral-crusted shapes there, any of which might have been the gold vases which they sought.

"Now we really get to work," said Don as he picked up a crowbar from the bottom of the motor-boat, and prepared to dive again.

With another crowbar in his hand, Micky followed Don over the side and down into the bamboo cage.

Now their task was to loosen the various odd-shaped projections within the cage and heave them up to the surface to examine them. The sharks swirled hungrily outside the bamboos as the boys reached the bottom and set to work!

THE EIGHT-ARMED MENACE

As they heaved with their long crowbars at the wreckage, Don and Micky were torn and scratched by the ragged edges of the coral. Thin wisps of blood drifted away from them, maddening the sharks, which hurled themselves again and again at the bamboo barrier. But the bamboos held.

The first promising piece of wreckage to come free was a stubby piece about two feet long, almost cylindrical in shape. Eagerly the pals hauled it to the surface between them and rolled it over the boat's side.

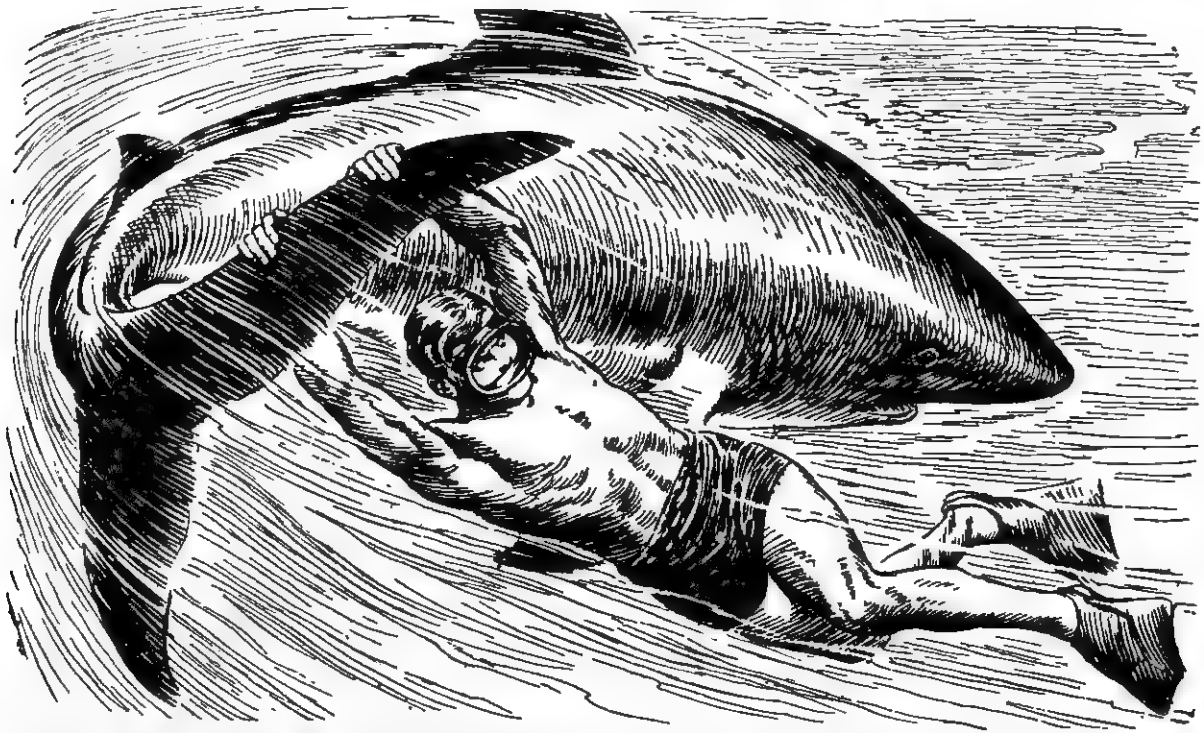
Their breath came faster as they chipped away at the coral. They waited to see the gleam of gold appear.

"It's certainly hollow," Micky muttered as he rattled away with a chipping hammer. "It could be a vase, though it's hardly the right shape."

A big bit of coral peeled away suddenly. The boys' faces fell. It was not gold that they saw beneath the coral. Instead they saw the dark grain of ancient oak.

"It's just an old water beaker," Micky muttered in disgust. "Oh well, try again."

For close on an hour they dived and levered with their crowbars, bringing many different pieces of wreckage to the surface. But each piece that they scanned proved to be—wreckage. By now they had arranged wicker baskets round their necks to haul their finds to the surface. Soon the bottom of the motor boat was covered with coral chippings. Micky began to lose heart.



Don had saved his pal's life by grabbing the killer shark's tail. But the undersea marauder began to whirl in tight circles, trying to bite Don. He would have to let go sometime—and then what would happen?

"I think we've had it," he grunted as he tenderly plucked fragments of coral from his legs. "Old Pengilly must have got back somehow and salvaged his gold vases himself. Either that or they've rolled off the reef into deep water."

"There's time enough yet," Don said doggedly. "There's still quite a lot of wreckage there."

As he dived again, an idea struck him. Where would be the most likely place for a man to stow anything valuable in a boat? At the bows, probably, for there there would be a small locker. Don moved up to the bows of the wreck.

The locker, of course, had long rotted away. But where it had been, just under the stump of the stem post, there was a strangely-shaped heap of coral. Don drove his crowbar into it. It burst apart after one good heave. In the drifting flakes of coral, Don caught a glimpse of the rusting fragments of an anchor chain.

He was about to leave the spot in disgust when he saw something else. Beneath the remains of the cable there were two long, slender shapes, like Indian clubs but fatter.

"The vases!" Don thought.

With mounting excitement he pushed the point of the crowbar home and threw his whole strength on the lever.

Cru-u-unch!

The coral was rotten and gave way at once. Don stooped to pick up the valuable vases.

Then—

Something gripped him by the ankle!

"This is no time for playing tricks," he thought irritably. "Micky should have more sense."

He turned to wave angrily at Micky.

But it was not his pal who held his ankle.

A long, rubber-like tentacle was wrapped round him. And stretching towards him were several more.

He was in the grip of a giant octopus! It had been drawn to the cage by the scent of blood. Its body was still beyond the bamboos. But its tentacles stretched easily inside.

With the crowbar which he still held, Don lashed out at the clinging tentacle. He might as well have tried to hurt a solid piece of rubber. The crowbar simply bounced off.

A second tentacle flipped round his other leg.

Slowly Don felt himself drawn towards the shadowy bulk of the octopus's body. He could see the huge staring eyes of the creature, and the evil, parrot-like beak.

Don's strength was fading rapidly. Lacking breath, he felt his lungs were bursting. A heaviness was creeping over all his limbs. He felt the "arms" of the octopus draw him unhurriedly nearer.

Above him he heard the thrash of Micky's legs as his pal swam closer. But would Micky realise what had happened? Would he see the danger that threatened Don? Would he realise that he himself was in peril.

"Got to warn him," Don thought.

Weakly he reached out with his crowbar and touched Micky with it.

Now Don was almost looking into the huge evil eyes of the octopus. That terrible beak mouth was opening to tear at him.

Micky watched in horror. What could he do to save his pal?

Suddenly he hit on a daring plan of action.

The water seemed to explode suddenly into a cascade of bubbles as Micky darted down between the octopus and his friend. Micky had his knife in his hand and he slashed out with it, driving the keen point between the octopus's eyes, a vital spot.

As it felt the blade, the octopus's grip loosened on Don, who found himself drifting slowly upwards. But Don could make no effort to save himself or to swim faster. He was completely exhausted. Then suddenly he found himself at the surface. Great breaths of cool air were sucked into his lungs. He felt his strength return.

Micky broke the surface at his side.

"The octopus got away," he gasped. "I don't think my knife blade was long enough to kill him."

"As long as he's outside the cage, that's all that matters," Don grinned.

After a long rest the boys swam warily down to the bottom again; and they saw the last of the octopus.

The blood from its wounds had attracted the sharks. Now the mighty arms were wrapped round one shark's body. But the other sharks were tearing at the octopus with their vicious teeth. That fight would not last long.

It was the work of only a few seconds for the pals to put the heavy vases into the basket. Then they swam to the surface and hauled them up.

While Don chipped eagerly at the coral coating, Micky happened to look up.

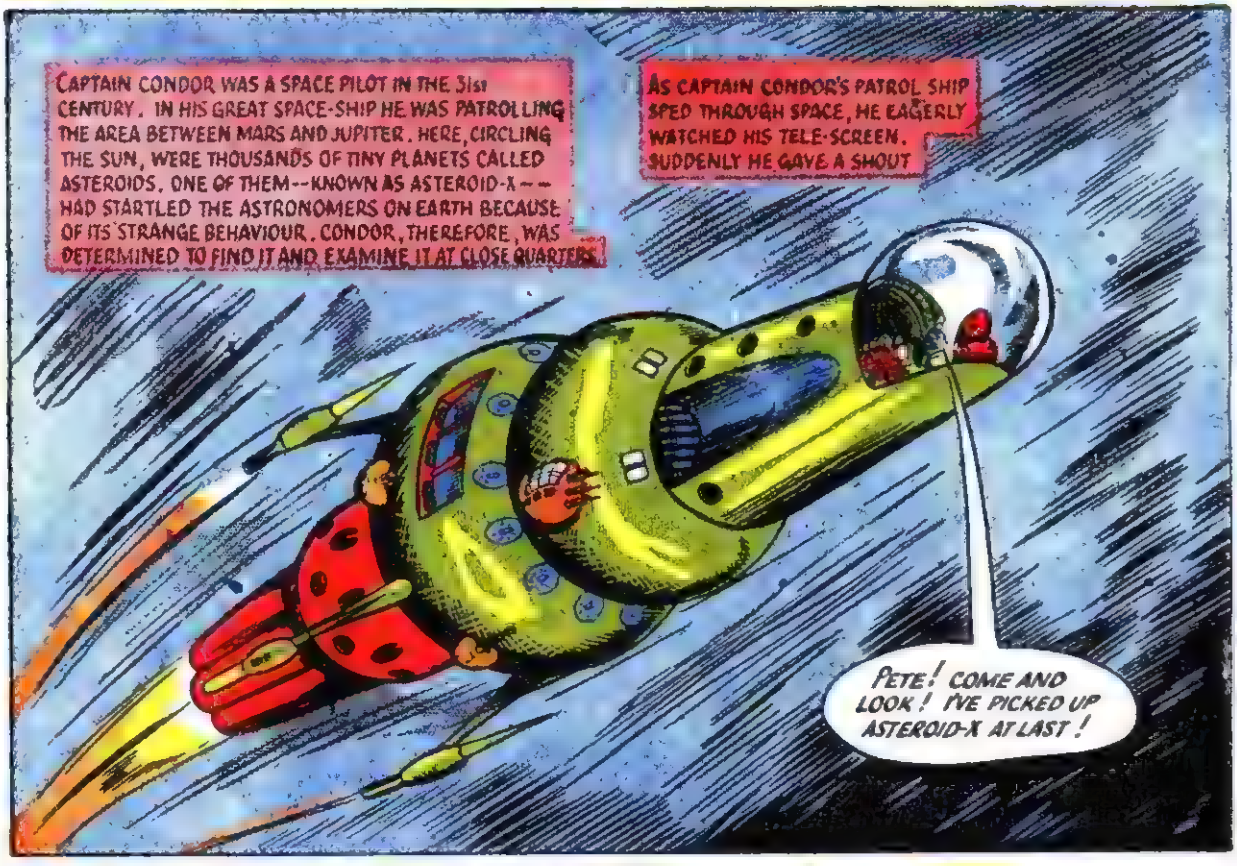
"Here comes the mission steamer," he said. "The one we're due to leave on."

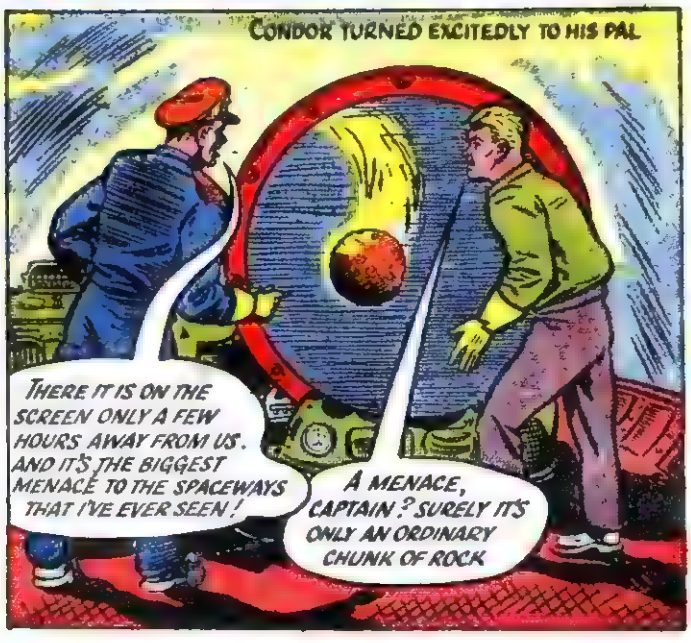
"Let it come," grinned Don. "It won't worry us any more. We'll soon have enough money to stay on here until things get more prosperous. Look!"

Through the chipped coral came a yellow gleam. The gleam of gold!

CAPTAIN CONDOR FIGHTS the SPACE PIRATES

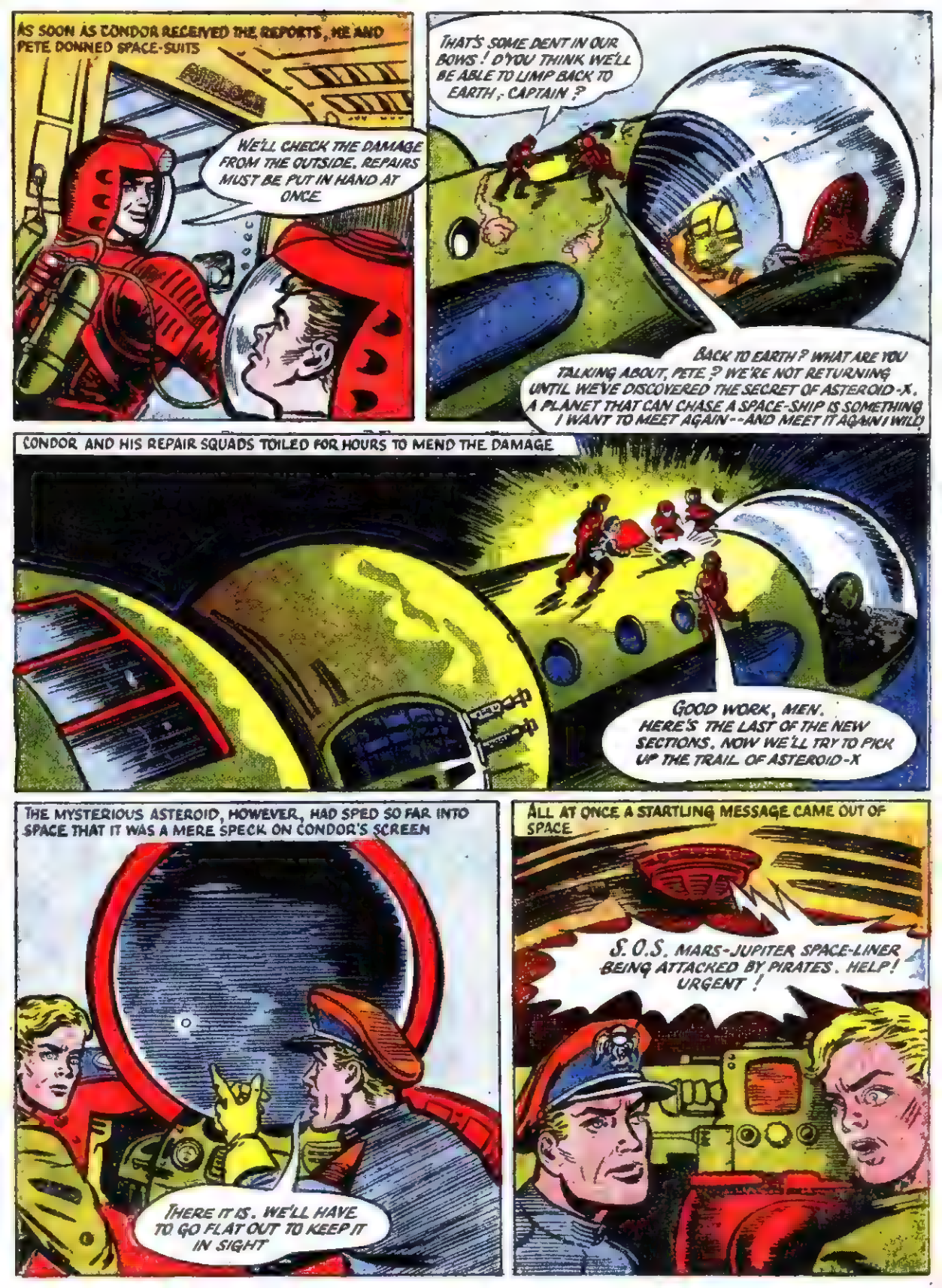
By Frank S Pepper


CAPTAIN CONDOR WAS A SPACE PILOT IN THE 31st CENTURY. IN HIS GREAT SPACE-SHIP HE WAS PATROLLING THE AREA BETWEEN MARS AND JUPITER. HERE, CIRCLING THE SUN, WERE THOUSANDS OF TINY PLANETS CALLED ASTEROIDS. ONE OF THEM--KNOWN AS ASTEROID-X--HAD STARTLED THE ASTRONOMERS ON EARTH BECAUSE OF ITS STRANGE BEHAVIOUR. CONDOR, THEREFORE, WAS DETERMINED TO FIND IT AND EXAMINE IT AT CLOSE QUARTERS.
AS CAPTAIN CONDOR'S PATROL SHIP SPED THROUGH SPACE, HE EAGERLY WATCHED HIS TELE-SCREEN. SUDDENLY HE GAVE A SHOUT
PETE! COME AND LOOK! I'VE PICKED UP ASTEROID-X AT LAST!


CONDOR TURNED EXCITEDLY TO HIS PAL
THERE IT IS ON THE SCREEN ONLY A FEW HOURS AWAY FROM US. AND IT'S THE BIGGEST MENACE TO THE SPACEWAYS THAT I'VE EVER SEEN!
A MENACE, CAPTAIN? SURELY IT'S ONLY AN ORDINARY CHUNK OF ROCK

ORDINARY, BE HANGED! IT'S A MILLION MILES OFF ITS PROPER ORBIT, AND HEADING STRAIGHT FOR EARTH. THERE'LL BE A TERRIBLE CATASTROPHE UNLESS WE CAN STOP IT

ALL WE CAN DO IS TO TURN OUR JET BLASTS ON TO IT, HOPING THAT WE MAKE IT CHANGE COURSE AND MISS THE EARTH
SUFFERING SATELLITES! SEE WHAT'S HAPPENED? IT HAS SWERVED, AND IS COMING STRAIGHT FOR US!
IN A FLASH CONDOR HAD WHIPPED OUT ORDERS TO HIS CREW
FIRE ALL STARBOARD JETS! EMERGENCY ACCELERATION FOR A FULL SPEED TURN
THE SINISTER ASTEROID-X JUST MISSED THE SPACE-SHIP. BUT IT HAD STILL MORE UNPLEASANT SURPRISES IN STORE FOR CONDOR
CAPTAIN! IT HAS CHANGED COURSE AGAIN! IT'S CHASING US!
FULL BLAST ON THE STARBOARD JETS. KEEP HER TURNING
NOT ALL CONDOR'S SKILL COULD PREVENT HIS SHIP FROM BEING STRUCK A GLANCING BLOW BY ITS UNCANNY PURSUER
THE IMPACT CAUSED CREW AND EQUIPMENT TO BE THROWN IN ALL DIRECTIONS
WHEN THE SHIP STEADIED DOWN, CONDOR AND PETE DRAGGED THEMSELVES FREE OF THE DEBRIS
THE ASTEROID IS NEARLY OUT OF SIGHT NOW. I'VE NEVER KNOWN ANYTHING MOVE SO FAST
NOR ME! CHECK WITH ALL DECK OFFICERS FOR REPORTS OF DAMAGE


AS SOON AS CONDOR RECEIVED THE REPORTS, HE AND PETE DONNED SPACE-SUITS
CONDOR
WE'LL CHECK THE DAMAGE FROM THE OUTSIDE. REPAIRS MUST BE PUT IN HAND AT ONCE
THAT'S SOME DENT IN OUR BOWS! D'YOU THINK WE'LL BE ABLE TO LIMP BACK TO EARTH, CAPTAIN?
BACK TO EARTH? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, PETE? WE'RE NOT RETURNING UNTIL WE'VE DISCOVERED THE SECRET OF ASTEROID-X. A PLANET THAT CAN CHASE A SPACE-SHIP IS SOMETHING I WANT TO MEET AGAIN--AND MEET IT AGAIN I WILL!
CONDOR AND HIS REPAIR SQUADS TOILED FOR HOURS TO MEND THE DAMAGE
GOOD WORK, MEN. HERE'S THE LAST OF THE NEW SECTIONS. NOW WE'LL TRY TO PICK UP THE TRAIL OF ASTEROID-X
THE MYSTERIOUS ASTEROID, HOWEVER, HAD SPED SO FAR INTO SPACE THAT IT WAS A MERE SPECK ON CONDOR'S SCREEN
THERE IT IS. WE'LL HAVE TO GO FLAT OUT TO KEEP IT IN SIGHT
ALL AT ONCE A STARTLING MESSAGE CAME OUT OF SPACE
S.O.S. MARS-JUPITER SPACE-LINER BEING ATTACKED BY PIRATES. HELP! URGENT!

PIRATES ! BUT IF WE ANSWER THIS S.O.S. IT MEANS LETTING THE ASTEROID GET AWAY FROM US
I'M NOT SO SURE. FOR THE MESSAGE COMES FROM THE VERY AREA THAT ASTEROID-X WAS HEADING FOR !
STREAKING THROUGH SPACE, CONDOR'S SHIP AT LAST SIGHTED THE ATTACKED LINER
ACTION ! ALL GUN STATIONS PREPARE TO ENGAGE PIRATES !
WITH NUCLEAR GUNS FLAMING, CONDOR'S SHIP HURTLED TO THE RESCUE
I'VE NEVER SEEN VESSELS LIKE THEM BEFORE, CAPTAIN. THEY'RE TOO SMALL TO HAVE A LONG RANGE. SO WHERE CAN THEY HAVE COME FROM ?
I'M CERTAIN THEY'RE SOMETHING TO DO WITH ASTEROID-X
PATROL SUPER
THE FEROCITY OF CONDOR'S ATTACK CAUSED SEVERAL OF THE PIRATES TO HIT BACK AT HIS SHIP
BUT THE PIRATES WERE NO MATCH FOR CONDOR'S POWERFUL GUNS
THEY'VE HAD ENOUGH, CAPTAIN. THEY'RE BOLTING

THE PIRATES TURNED AWAY AND FLED AT SUCH A SPEED THAT CONDOR'S SHIP WAS LEFT STANDING
BY THE TIME CONDOR HAD MADE SURE THAT THE LINER COULD REACH PORT WITHOUT HELP, THE PIRATES HAD GONE SO FAR THAT NO SIGN OF THEM COULD BE SEEN ON THE TELE-SCREEN. CONDOR DECIDED, THEREFORE, TO RESUME HIS HUNT FOR ASTEROID-X. BY LOCATING THAT HE SHREWDLY SUSPECTED THAT HE WOULD AGAIN COME IN CONTACT WITH THE PIRATES. AND AFTER A LONG SEARCH-
THAT'S THE ASTEROID RIGHT ENOUGH. BUT IT'S ONLY A HUNK OF ROCK FLOATING IN SPACE
I WONDER! I SHAN'T BE SATISFIED UNTIL WE'VE LANDED ON IT AND HAD A GOOD LOOK ROUND
AS A SPECIAL PRECAUTION CONDOR ORDERED HIS PATROL SHIP TO BE HALTED, AND ITS NEUTRALISING SCREENS TO BE SWITCHED ON
ANYONE WITH TELE-APPARATUS ON THE ASTEROID WON'T BE ABLE TO SPOT THE SHIP NOW, AS RADAR WAVES WOULD BE BENT ROUND IT. COME ON, PETE--WE'LL PAY THE PLACE A VISIT!
IN JET-PROPELLED SPACE-SUITS, AND LOADED WITH SCIENTIFIC EQUIPMENT, CONDOR AND PETE LEFT THE SHIP
IF THE ASTEROID IS INHABITED, CAPTAIN, I'LL EAT MY HELMET! IT'S JUST A DEAD WORLD, IN MY OPINION
I'M CERTAIN IT'S FAR MORE THAN THAT. WELL, WE'LL SOON KNOW
CONDOR WAS THE FIRST TO LAND. WITHOUT DELAY HE STARTED TO SET UP HIS INSTRUMENTS
WE'LL USE THE SHOCK TEST FIRST TO FIND OUT WHAT THE ASTEROID IS MADE OF. CAREFUL WITH THE EXPLOSIVE. YOU'RE CARRYING ENOUGH TO BLOW A PLANET TO BITS IF IT ALL WENT OFF AT ONCE!
PETE FIRED A TINY EXPLOSIVE, AND CONDOR CAREFULLY CHECKED HIS DIALS. THEN--
THUNDER! I CAN'T BELIEVE IT, PETE. THERE MUST BE SOME MISTAKE. WE'LL TRY AGAIN. FIRE A SECOND CHARGE

AFTER THE SECOND EXPLOSION, CONDOR EXCITEDLY CALLED PETE TO HIM.
WHAT D'YOU THINK? BOTH OUR TESTS PROVE THAT THIS ASTEROID IS HOLLOW!
HARDLY HAD THE PALS RECOVERED FROM THEIR AMAZEMENT THAN THEY GOT ANOTHER STAGGERING SURPRISE.
FLAMING COMETS! THERE'S A MAN COMING OUT OF THAT HOLE!
AIR-LOCK
DUCKING BEHIND A ROCK, CONDOR AND PETE CONTINUED TO WATCH. TO THEIR ASTONISHMENT, A SWARM OF MEN IN SPACE-SUITS EMERGED AND RAN TO THE SPOT WHERE THE EXPLOSIONS HAD OCCURRED
THEY MUST HAVE LIVING QUARTERS UNDER THE GROUND, CAPTAIN. BUT WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?
THAT'S WHAT I INTEND TO DISCOVER. GET READY!
AS SOON AS THE MEN HAD MOVED AWAY, THE TWO PALS MADE A DASH FOR THE TRAP-DOOR
THERE ARE STEPS HERE — AND I CAN HEAR MACHINERY
LET'S GET DOWN OUT OF SIGHT BEFORE WE'RE SEEN
AS THEY REACHED A PLATFORM, AN ASTOUNDING SIGHT MET THEIR GAZE.
THIS SOLVES PART OF THE MYSTERY OF ASTEROID-X, PETE. IT ISN'T A NATURAL BABY PLANET AFTER ALL. IT'S A MOBILE SPACE PORT!

THE PLACE HAS BEEN BUILT BY THE PIRATES TO SERVE AS THEIR HIDE-OUT. SEE--THERE ARE THEIR SPACE-SHIPS!
NOW THAT CONDOR REALISED THE USE TO WHICH THE ASTEROID WAS BEING PUT, HE DARINGLY DECIDED TO TRY TO GAIN CONTROL OF IT
THAT'S WHERE THE MECHANISM IS, PETE. WE'LL STRIKE THERE FIRST
SUDDENLY CONDOR AND PETE WERE SEEN BY ONE OF THE PIRATES WHO HAD RETURNED FROM OUTSIDE
BOSS! LOOK OUT! A COUPLE OF SPIES!
SWIFTLY THE PIRATE BOSS SOUNDED AN ALARM
BY HEAVENS, IT'S CONDOR! HOW DID HE GET HERE?
THE ALARM SIGNAL BROUGHT PIRATES SWARMING FROM EVERY LEVEL
WE'RE SURROUNDED, CAPTAIN! WHAT SHALL WE DO?
LIKE LIGHTNING CONDOR SNATCHED THE PACK FROM PETE'S BACK AND RAISED IT ALOFT
I WOULDN'T SHOOT IF I WERE YOU. I'M HOLDING ENOUGH EXPLOSIVE TO BLOW US ALL TO DUST!

SCARED OF THE DEADLY LOAD WHICH CONDOR CARRIED, THE PIRATES DARED NOT ATTACK HIM. COOLLY HE EXAMINED THE COMPLICATED CONTROL PANEL
LET'S RUSH HIM. HE'S BLUFFING. HE WOULDN'T DARE--
HE WOULD, THOUGH. KEEP BACK !
PRESS THAT RED BUTTON FOR ME, PETE
WHEN PETE PRESSED THE BUTTON, ASTEROID-X BEGAN TO OPEN DOWN THE MIDDLE !
AS THE OPENING WIDENED, THE BAFFLED PIRATES SAW THAT CONDOR'S SHIP, ITS SCREENS NOW SWITCHED OFF, HAD COME CLOSER WITH ITS GUNS TRAINED ON ASTEROID-X
WE'RE CORNERED ! THE GAME'S UP
YOU'VE SAID IT. YOU'RE ALL UNDER ARREST
UNDER THE WATCHFUL EYES OF CONDOR'S MEN, THE PIRATES WERE TRANSFERRED TO THE SPACE-SHIP
IT WAS A DARNED CLEVER IDEA OF THEIRS TO BUILD A HIDE-OUT THAT LOOKED LIKE AN ASTEROID
BUT THEY MADE A MISTAKE WHEN THEY CROSSED YOUR ORBIT, CAPTAIN !
A FEW MINUTES LATER--
CONDOR CALLING EARTH. MYSTERY OF ASTEROID-X SOLVED. AM RETURNING WITH PRISONERS. PATROL COMPLETED. SIGNING OFF
THE END.

MARCUS, the ROMAN WRESTLER

BY RAY MARR

THE FIELD OF GAMES

THE gates of Rome swung shut behind the borrowed chariot of Marcus, the young hunter.

It was almost dusk, and Marcus held the two fiery black horses in to a slow trot. They would willingly have galloped to their stable, but the busy streets were full of people and Marcus had no wish to run anyone down.

The chariot was heavy with the results of his hunting—deer, hare and a boar.

There was a small, open field within the city, and Marcus passed this on his way to the stables. He pulled the chariot to a halt to watch two boys who were wrestling on the grass.

This was the Field of Games, open to all the people of Rome. It was used mostly at dusk, when the people had finished their work. Beyond the wrestling boys, others practised with short wooden swords, imitating the gladiators they had seen in the arena.

"Ho there, Hadrian," Marcus called, recognizing one of the boys. "Not like that—unless you want your neck to be snapped like a twig."

He jumped lithely to the ground and went towards the boys.

"Behold," said Marcus to the smaller of the two, a cheery-faced lad, "You thrust out your neck as you came in for the hold as if you were a chicken in a farmer's field."

He crouched in a wrestler's stance.

"See how I bring my chin in to my chest," he said. "I shorten my neck so that it makes the smaller grip for an armhold. Then I spring in, and—"

He sprang at the bigger lad and seized him by shoulder and leg, and laid him gently on the grass.

"Down you go Agricola, a fall against you."

The boys laughed, but respect was in their eyes. Was not Marcus the finest wrestler in Rome? Men said that if he would but enter the arena he could easily win his weight in gold. Marcus, however, scoffed at the people who said this, for he wrestled as he raced—for the joy of the sport and not for money.

"Teach us that hold, Marcus," Hadrian asked eagerly. "I would like to learn how to throw that bully, Simo, on his back. He thinks that just because he is the son of Senator Livius he is above all of us."

"Tomorrow," Marcus laughed. "Tomorrow I will come to the field. Be here at the sixth hour

He Used His Strength to Outwit the Senator Who Tried to Stop Sport!

and I will teach you a throw that will put anyone on his back."

"Alas," said Hadrian, sorrowfully, "tomorrow this will no longer be the Field of Games."

Marcus gazed at him in amazement. "What nonsense is this? This land has always been the Field of Games. It always will be. Be here tomorrow and I will teach you that throw. And don't say—"

Before Marcus could finish, a sudden clatter of hooves made him swing round. His horses, tired of waiting for their master, had pulled their reins free and cantered away, the chariot rumbling after them.

They were trotting slowly and Marcus would have caught them in a moment. Unfortunately, a pedestrian tried to stop the runaways. He grabbed for one of the horses, held the rein for a moment, and then slipped. This frightened one horse and it reared up, pawing the air. The front of the chariot bumped the horse's hind legs, frightening it even more Immediately both horses broke into a gallop.

People scattered to either side as they saw the horses thunder towards them.

Marcus darted after the chariot, his bare feet hardly seeming to touch the ground. He was gaining slowly, for the weight of the chariot slowed the horses. But ahead lay the crowded market-place, at the bottom of a steep hill. On the hill the chariot would gather speed. Chariot and horses would smash into the market-place and do terrible damage before they were halted.

There was only one hope. The road swung in a long bend. A narrow lane would cut fifty yards off the gap.

Marcus swung into the lane. A small hand cart was in his way, but he leapt it without slowing his stride.

He reached the main road a few yards ahead of the horses. He could have sprung on the nearest horse and grabbed the reins, but he would have frightened the animal. It might have shied away from him, making him miss his grip. He swung and ran in the same direction as the chariot. With a swift leap he reached the lurching platform.

"Wo-ho my beauties," he called. "Wo-ho there. Wo-ho!"

The reins lay on the horses' backs, beyond his reach. He snatched a long spear from the chariot floor, and swiftly hooked the reins towards himself. Only then could he halt the chariot.

It was almost too late. The market-place seemed almost under the horses' hooves as Marcus swung back with all his weight on the reins. The rearing horses clattered and skidded their way to a halt, almost on top of a sweetmeat-seller's stall.

"Your horses are hungry, Marcus," said the sweetmeat seller when he had recovered his breath. "They seek to sample my wares. Do you not feed them?"

"Feed them the whip!" sneered a passer-by. "Let them eat the whip so that they will not run away again."

"They were frightened," Marcus said shortly. "It was no fault of the horses."

He bought some sweets and fed them to the foam-covered horses. Then he asked the sweetmeat seller: "What is this I hear about the Field of Games?"

The man scowled angrily.

"'Tis the doing of Senator Livius. But did you not hear the proclamation?"

"These two days I have been hunting," Marcus answered. "But what does the evil and greedy Livius plan now?"

The sweetmeat seller's voice dropped to a whisper, and he looked round uneasily. The senator's spies were everywhere.

"He is going to erect a fence round the Field of Games."

"What!" Marcus exploded. "That he cannot do. The field belongs to the people for their hours of sport. It has always been the Field of Games. Did I not learn to wrestle on its grass myself? What of the Scroll of Rights in the City Library? Is it not written there that the Field of Games is to be kept for the people's sport while Rome remains a city? Livius cannot flout the Scroll of Rights, powerful though he is."

The sweetmeat seller smiled sourly.

"He could not disregard the Scroll of Rights," he whispered. "But it seems there is no Scroll. When the People's Tribune heard the proclamation, they went straightway to the library to seek the Scroll. It was not to be found. And since the Scroll is gone, there is no way of stopping Livius from fencing the field in the morning."

"No way?" snapped Marcus grimly, swinging himself into the chariot. "I will find a way."

As he drove off, the sweetmeat seller smiled grimly.

"If there is a way, Marcus is the man to find it!"

For hours that night Marcus lay awake. His angry promise had been easy to make. It would not be so easy to fulfil. Without that Scroll of Rights there seemed no legal way of stopping Senator Livius from carrying out his plan.

In fact, the law was on the Senator's side. For land that was unfenced—and there was no proof who owned it—could become the property of the first man to proclaim his intention of fencing it.

The Scroll of Rights proved the land belonged to the people—but the Scroll had mysteriously vanished.

"Very convenient for Senator Livius," Marcus growled. "Strange that it should have disappeared just before his proclamation."

He sat up suddenly on his hard bed. "Unless Livius knew that it had vanished. And the only way he could know that would be if he was responsible. Livius himself must have taken the Scroll."

He threw himself from the bed.

"By Jupiter, I'll drag a confession from him like an aching tooth."

But he halted before he reached the door. The wealthy Senator had scores of servants. It was impossible to burst into his villa.

"And yet I cannot let him fence the field in the morning," Marcus muttered. "Once it is fenced it will take more than the Scroll to free it. I must have time—time to get the Scroll back to its place in the City Library."

He paced up and down like a caged lion.

"Time. Time! By the gods of Minerva I must delay the fencing."

Suddenly he halted. He had just remembered one of the old laws of Rome. That might help him to beat Senator Livius!

MARCUS ACCEPTS A CHALLENGE

A GLUM crowd waited at the Field of Games next morning. They watched the ranks of the Senator's men draw up beside the field. The men carried spades and fence posts. Senator Livius himself was carried up in a gold-decorated litter.

His fat, greedy face had a self-satisfied smile as he ordered his eight huge Nubian slaves to set him down. Once the land was his he would sell it at a high price. His son, Simo, smirked at the boys, who were watching gloomily as the men prepared to drive in the first fence post.

"Well? Well? Why do you wait?" Livius snarled. "Set up the fence."

"Surely you have forgotten something," said a voice from the crowd. Marcus stepped forward.

"This is the Field of Games," Marcus thundered, "before you can take it you must make your challenge."

"A formality," Livius sneered. "An ancient rite that has lost its meaning."

"The challenge! The challenge!" The crowd roared eagerly. Livius shrugged his shoulders.

"Very well. If you wish it."

He stood up in his litter. A trumpeter sounded a fanfare.

"Hear ye," he shouted in his rather high, shrill voice, "according to the ancient laws of Rome I have issued a proclamation of my intention to fence this land, there being no legal owner of the land—"

"It's the property of the people of Rome," Marcus put in.

The Senator went on as if he had not heard.

"Today I will fence the land and it will be mine, since mine was the first proclamation. If any dispute my right to fence, I challenge him to stand forth, to be prepared to fight with or without weapons on this land that I claim. If none stand forth to take my challenge then the land is mine."

He prepared to stand down, sure that no one would dare to oppose him.

"I take up your challenge."

There was a long silence after Marcus had said the words. Then the air was torn with cheers. Senator Livius scowled down at him.

"You dare to challenge me? To dispute my right to the ground? For that you will die. Olo!" He shouted, and one of the Nubian litter bearers ran towards him.

"Prepare to fight," the Senator snapped. "Break this upstart's back."

As Marcus had known he would, Livius was not daring to do battle himself. He was exercising his right to appoint a deputy.

The litter bearer was a huge man, at least six inches taller than Marcus. His muscles bulged under his shining black skin. White teeth gleamed in his broad, scarred face. He did not expect to have much difficulty in disposing of Marcus.

The Roman looked like a boy beside his opponent, and many in the crowd groaned as they saw the two men square up for the first fall.

But there were others who saw the lithe, cat-like way Marcus moved. His muscles did not bulge like the Nubian's, but they were as tough as the twisted sinews of his own bowstring.

The two men circled slowly in the middle of the ring that had been formed by the vast crowd.

Olo was the first to move. Like a bull he rushed at Marcus, his arms spread wide to catch the hunter and crush him. But Marcus slipped easily under the arms, and as Olo swept by he put a swift hold on his neck and arm.

The Nubian was no longer grinning. As Marcus twisted at the powerful black arm, Olo bent lower and lower. He jerked suddenly and took the only possible way out of the lock. A quick forward somersault!

Marcus's grip was broken, and one of the Nubian's heels caught him a blow on the neck that sent him reeling backwards. Before he could recover, Olo was upon him. A black hand was on Marcus's jaw, another held the small of his back. The Nubian pressed relentlessly. Marcus's head was forced slowly back. Suddenly he went limp.

There was a groan from the crowd.

"Told you that black fellow would be too much for him," said a man. "I saw him win three bouts in the arena only last week. Snapped men's necks

like carrots, he did. Same as he's doing with poor Marcus."

"Poor Marcus?" said another. "Poor Olo, I would say. Look there."

Marcus had been shamming. When he relaxed, Olo's grip eased for a second. Like a snake Marcus wriggled free.

Again the two men circled. They were wary now. Each knew the other's mettle.

Each in turn darted in to snatch a hold. In turn each was foiled. But in Senator Livius's eyes a look of anxiety began to creep. The Nubian was breathing heavily. He was tiring.

Livius called another servant and muttered some orders in his ear. The man nodded and picked up a long stave. He worked his way towards the front of the crowd.

Marcus launched himself at Senator Livius, determined to take possession of the precious parchment. Instantly the treacherous Roman thrust it towards the brazier. "Take one more step, and the flames will burn the Scroll!" he shouted.

Marcus was pressing Olo now. He was shaking the Nubian with quick punches to head and body—for in Roman wrestling the use of the fists was permitted.

Olo was baffled by the shower of blows. He launched occasional wild swings which were so low that Marcus dodged them easily. Round the ring they moved until they were level with the Senator's stave-armed servant.

Suddenly the man thrust out the long stave. It went between Marcus's legs as he sprang in for a powerful upper-cut. His legs were jerked from under him and he sprawled to the ground.

He heard Olo's grunt of triumph above him, and he just managed to squirm round on to his back.

Olo dived at him, intending to fasten his mighty hands round the Roman's neck.

But Marcus caught the outstretched hands, and his feet came up and pushed with all his strength right on the Nubian's stomach. At the same time Marcus pulled with his hands.

Olo was thrown clean over Marcus's head and into the crowd!

With a delighted grin Marcus heard the Senator's angry voice end in a gasp. Olo had landed on the litter.

The Nubian did not attempt to rise again. The fight was over and Marcus had won. There would be no fence erected that day.

But it was time only that Marcus had gained. Under the laws of Rome, Senator Livius was entitled to make another challenge the next day—and after that every day.

It would be a hollow victory unless Marcus made use of the time to recover the Scroll of Rights. For sooner or later the Senator's champion would win. When that happened, the Field of Games would be fenced.

Marcus had known this before the fight started. Now he began to carry out a further part of his plan!

THE SECRET PANEL

"So you lose, Senator," he said as Livius scrambled, wheezing, to his feet. "Now will you give up your idea of stealing the Field of Games?"

"Stealing!" gasped the Senator. "Fine words. I act within the law."

"Only until the Scroll of Rights is back within the City Library," Marcus said. "And it will be back there at the twelfth hour this day."

He was staring into the Senator's eyes. He saw a flicker of fear there. His own face showed no expression, but inwardly he felt his spirits rise. He had been right. Livius had the Scroll!

"Scroll of Rights!" said the Senator scornfully, "you babble of something that does not exist."

For all his brave words the alarm was plain on his face as he turned to his men and snarled at them to bear him home.

Marcus eased his way quickly through the crowd. It was not easy, for everyone wanted to slap him on the back. They would have chaired him off in triumph to the Forum if he had allowed them. But he broke away and soon he was running through a maze of narrow back streets, heading for the villa of Senator Livius.

The route he had chosen was much shorter than the one the Senator had to follow in his cumbersome litter. Marcus was also moving much faster than the litter. The young hunter reached the villa well ahead of the Senator.

As he had expected the place was empty. All the servants but the watchman had gone to the Field of Games to watch the fencing of the people's land.

Marcus was easily able to slip into the marble-built building unseen. He looked round the silken luxury of the place and his nose wrinkled in disgust. He found a hiding-place behind a curtain, and there he waited.

Soon he heard the pad-pad of bare feet outside. Livius snarled orders to his litter bearers. A moment later the Senator entered. He was in a hurry, and his eyes were anxious as he crossed the wide room to fumble at a panel in the wall.

Marcus smiled grimly. This was what he had expected. His words at the Field had worried the Senator. Now he was making sure that he still had the Scroll.

Click!

The panel swung open. The Senator heaved a sigh of relief.

"Thank Jupiter. It's still there. That rogue did not have it after all."

"Not yet, you thief!"

Livius spun round at the sound of Marcus's voice. Marcus had stepped from behind the curtain.

"You!" he croaked. "How—how did you—?" His face was pale.

"I'll thank you for that Scroll," said Marcus in an icy voice. The Senator's trembling hands reached into the secret safe and picked up the Scroll. He seemed about to hand it to Marcus.

Too late the hunter saw the flicker in the Senator's eyes. Livius lunged suddenly with the Scroll, which was a long roll of heavy parchment, and jabbed it into Marcus's face.

For a moment the hunter was blinded. He grabbed for the Senator, who was already running into the next room, where a fountain played. As he ran Livius screamed for help. There was a rush of footsteps in the halls beyond.

Yet Marcus was now almost on the Senator. A few more strides and he would catch him.

"Stop!" The Senator shouted suddenly, as he swung behind a burning brazier. "One more step and the brazier will burn the Scroll."

Marcus's answer was swift. He did not stop, but stooped as he ran. His hands scooped up water from the fountain. He threw it on the brazier. The flames which had just begun to scorch the Scroll were doused. Marcus grabbed the precious parchment.

"You'll never get out of here alive," Livius snarled. "Seize him, men. Ten gold pieces to the one who takes him."

The servants, who had arrived at last, plunged towards Marcus. There were half a dozen of them and at their head was the huge Olo.

"This time you no escape!" the massive Nubian growled as he sprang forward.

For a second it looked as if Marcus was afraid. He tucked the Scroll into his toga and turned on his heel. Only for two paces, though. Then he snatched up the brazier by its long bronze legs and whirled it round his head.

The charcoal was still hot, though the flames had been doused. There were screeches of pain and surprise as it scattered over the attacking men. Only Olo still advanced.

Marcus swung the brazier low and the huge Nubian tripped. Marcus grabbed the man's outstretched hand and swung with all his strength. For the second time that day Olo flew through the air. For the second time he landed on Senator Livius!

Splash!

Both men were carried into the fountain.

In the moment's confusion Marcus raced for a long curtain hanging from the ceiling. He grabbed it and it swung him over the heads of the still confused men.

Then he was racing for the door and out of it. No one would catch him now. Looking at the sun he saw he still had time to reach the Senate before the twelfth hour, as he had promised.

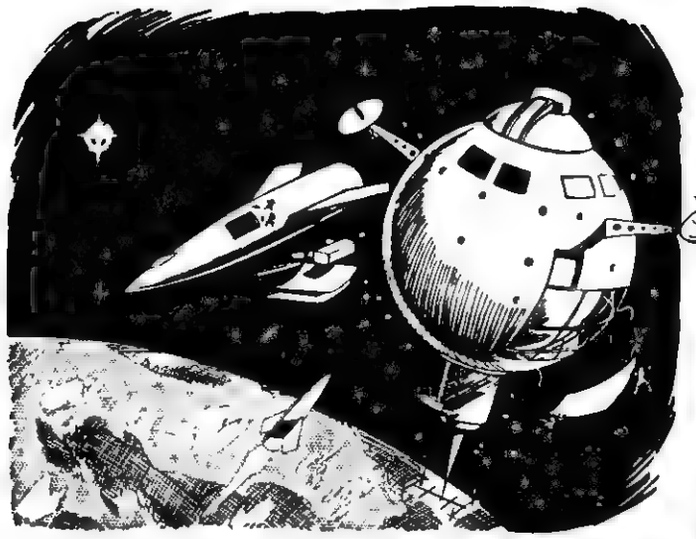
He unrolled the Scroll of Rights as he ran. There were the words he sought: "That land, known of old as the Field of Games, shall be kept and reserved for the people of Rome for the practice of all games and sports—wrestling, fencing, casting of the weights, running of foot races . . ."

He did not read the whole Scroll. It was sufficient for him to know that once it was placed within the Senate it would be safe. And the Field of Games would be safe, too. Not even Livius would dare to try to steal it again.

He would still be able to keep his promise to the two boys, Hadrian and Agricola. At the sixth hour he would be at the field to teach them wrestling. There would be no fence to stop him!

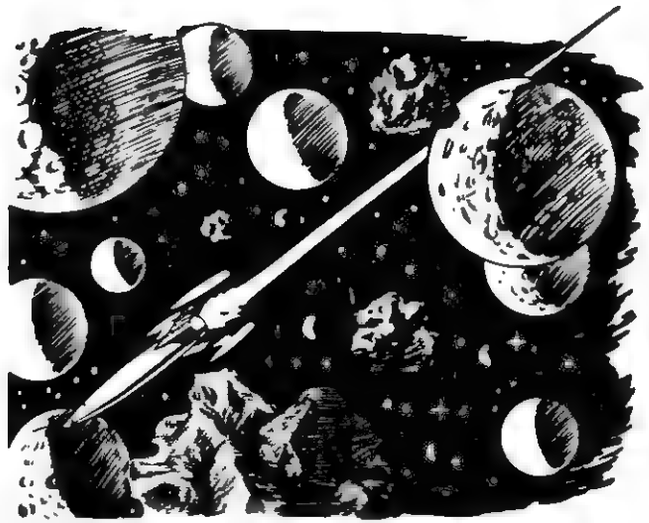
WONDERS OF OUTER SPACE

By Harry Hollinson, D.F.C.



Scientists maintain that within the next half-century the first space-stations may be built thousands of miles above the Earth. The workmen would wear space-suits fitted with oxygen supplies and a radio set, and would be able to watch the Earth revolve beneath them.

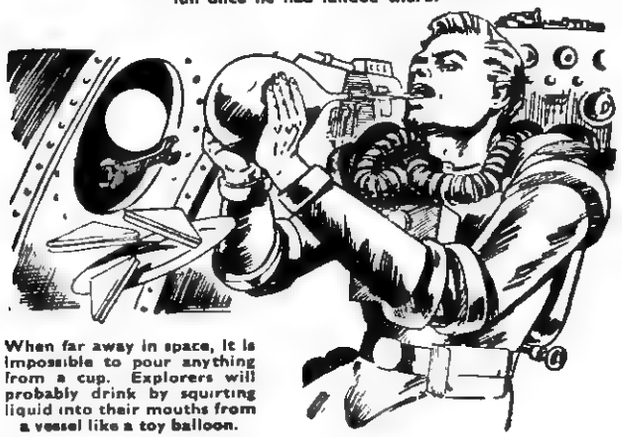
It would be useless for the crew of a ship damaged in space to bale out. For they would not drop away from the vessel, but travel alongside it—at the same speed and in the same direction. Gravity would not affect them, you see.



Journeying between Mars and Jupiter in a spaceship will be tremendously hazardous. For the area contains thousands of asteroids, the sizes of which range from 5 to 500 miles in circumference.

The Moon is our nearest neighbour in space. Yet if it were possible to lay a railway track to it from the Earth, an express train travelling at a mile a minute would take roughly six months to make the journey.

If houses are built on the Moon, it will be possible to jump over them. The reason? The Moon's gravity has only one-sixth the pull of that on Earth. So a space-explorer with a sense of humour could have great fun once he had landed there.



When far away in space, it is impossible to pour anything from a cup. Explorers will probably drink by squirting liquid into their mouths from a vessel like a toy balloon.

A man who couldn't stand on his head on the Earth could do it easily in space, because of the lack of gravity. To prevent a ship's crew from drifting about, as in this picture, the men may be equipped with magnetic boots.

Seen from the Earth, Saturn is a bright point of light. But space-explorers would get this view of the planet from Dione, one of Saturn's moons. Dione is the same distance from Saturn as the Moon is from the Earth.

Deimos, one of Mars' two moons, is only 5 miles in diameter. Gravity is so low that if a space-man put his foot down too hard he would soar into space. A safety rope anchored securely is a " must " on Deimos

The Downfall of Sammy the Sneak

By Ronald Knill

TEACHING A SNEAK A LESSON

ROARING like a lion, Mr. Baxter ended the history lesson with the words—" It was Drake, and not Raleigh, who brought the first potato to England."

" I don't care if it was Raleigh, Drake, or old Tomlinson the greengrocer who brought the first potato," sourly commented Roger Whiteway to his chum, Jim Browning, as they walked down the corridor after class, " all I do care is that I shan't be playing in the big football match this afternoon."

" Yes, it's a rotten shame," replied Jim. " And you captain, too. This couldn't have happened at a worse time."

It was Wednesday mid-day, and in two hours' time Blackthorne School were playing their greatest rivals, Donnington School. Roger was captain and centre-half of Blackthorne's football team, and always a tower of strength to his side. But this afternoon he would be learning French verbs instead of kicking a ball.

" And all because of that rotten sneak, Sammy Slaker," went on Roger in his misery, " I reckon he pushed old man Morton under that bag of soot."

" I wouldn't be surprised at that," replied Jim, " It's just the kind of thing he would do."

" Old man Morton," as he was disrespectfully called, was the English and Maths master. The day before, Roger had emptied a bag of soot over the bannister of the stairs—and it had showered on Mr. Morton.

Roger had aimed the soot at Sammy Slaker, but somehow the sneak had dodged it, and Mr. Morton had walked right into the way of it.

" Even then it wasn't old Morton who saw who dropped it—his eyes were too full of soot." Jim grinned as he spoke.

" But, of course, Sammy Slaker had to go and tell," groaned Roger, " and get me ' gated ' for a week, with this important match on to-day. I wish I could think of some way to stop him always sneaking round and prying into other people's business. He's a real nasty type."

" One of the worst," agreed Jim.

" Whenever we think up a real snorting, sizzling

The Fourth-Form Japers Taught Sammy That Telling Tales Didn't Pay!

prank," went on Roger, "Sammy gets his ears and nose to work, and then we're on the carpet."

"That's true," nodded Jim, "and to get you 'gated' to-day of all days is the end. Roger, Sammy must be taught a lesson he will never forget."

"A lesson," cried Roger, and slapped his chum on the back. "Why, of course—a lesson. You've given me a wonderful idea. I feel better already. I'll work out the scheme this afternoon. It will help to take my mind off not playing in the football match."

Jim laughed.

"Yes, and off French verbs, too!"

At tea-time there was a dismal air, and everyone was down in the dumps. Blackthorne had lost by two clear goals. All the blame was laid upon Sammy Slaker, who was sitting at the end of the table, away from the others.

"I did my best at centre-half," said Buster Stenton, between bites of a doughnut, the sugar of which glistened on his chin, and on the end of his nose. Then gulping a piece down, he added, "But I can't play like Roger."

"We know," agreed Jim, "and you helped us all you could. It's not your fault—it's Sammy's for sneaking on Roger, our best player, and keeping him out of the game."

Sammy Slaker felt all the glares upon him, and his ears reddened. But he chewed on slowly and steadily. He decided he would wait until the others had gone before he got up from the table; it would be safer.

At length he saw the last two, Roger and Jim, move towards the door. Sammy's quick darting eyes saw a letter drop from Roger's pocket. The sneak snatched at the letter.

Sammy hurried to his room, locked the door, and took out the letter.

It had been delivered by hand, just before tea, Sammy decided. In the excitement of listening to the story of the match, Roger must have stuffed it into his pocket and forgotten it. The letter was addressed to Roger, but Sammy had no scruples about that. The envelope was sealed when he found it, so Sammy felt sure that he would now know something that Roger did not.

There was just a single sheet of paper, with only a single sentence written on it: "Collect from old empty vicarage, midnight Wednesday—second door on left."

That was the message. Sammy sat puzzled. There was an old empty vicarage down in the village. That must be the one. He could not think what Roger would have to collect. It must be something very secret if it had to be collected at midnight, and it must be something very valuable to be worth the risk of being caught out after "lights out."

Sammy walked to the window, still trying to solve the puzzle. He saw Jim go through the gate, and then turn left as though making for the village. Under his arm he carried a parcel.

"Wonder what's in that parcel," said Sammy to himself. He couldn't help being curious about what other people were doing. But he hadn't time to worry out that problem now, with the bigger problem he already had on hand.

He read the message again and again, struggling to understand its meaning. He was determined that somehow he would unravel its mystery. But to do so meant that he had to make a big decision, and Sammy did not like danger, and hadn't much courage. But his inquisitiveness nagged at him. Sammy made the big decision; he would keep the appointment intended for Roger!

"YOU'RE A GHOST!"

AT eleven-thirty that night Sammy climbed through the window of the dormitory. He gently lowered himself down the drainpipe to the ground. Going past the Head's study, Sammy had to crawl on hands and knees for fear of being seen. Then quickly he ran across the lawn to the gate near the porter's lodge. Twice he slipped and grazed his knees as he clumsily climbed the gate.

Once in the road he breathed a little easier. He hurried along the road, keeping well to the grass verge, in the shadow of the hedge. A horse in a nearby field whinnied, and the startled Sammy felt his heart beat faster. He would be glad now when he had got this job finished. Adventure was something which did not appeal to Sammy.

He eased open the rusted and creaking gate to the vicarage garden. The gaunt forbidding building stood looking grimly down at him. Sammy was tempted to turn and run. When a window rattled, and an owl hooted, Sammy's nerve almost broke. But only a few more minutes, and a few more yards, separated him from the solution to this mystery which nagged at his mind.

Nervously he tried the door. It opened into a damp, dark passage. There was not a sound nor a light anywhere. The beam of his torch guided him to the "second door on the left." Sammy dimmed the torch, held his breath, and listened with his ear to the door. Everything was still.

Thoughts madly tumbled after each other through his mind, trying to guess what might be on the other side of the door. Maybe a map indicating hidden treasure. Perhaps a precious stone. It could even be atomic secrets or something!

"I am Sir Walter Raleigh!" boomed the stern-faced man in Elizabethan dress. Sammy halted, wide-eyed with amazement. So far he didn't suspect that a practical joke was being played on him by his schoolmates!

Whatever it was, it meant he, Sammy, was outwitting Roger. That meant a lot to Sammy.

He was startled as the church clock broke the silence of the night as it struck twelve o'clock.

His hands were damp with sweat as he turned the door knob.

As Sammy pushed the door open a huge light was turned on, flooding the tiny room with light.

"O-o-ooh—," the startled boy cried, and then stood as though petrified by the sight before his eyes. Facing the door, and not a yard away from him, sat a bearded figure clad in Elizabethan dress.

The man's eyes were bold, arched by thick black brows, and they seemed to burn right into Sammy. His firm, fearless mouth was slightly raised in one corner, as though contemptuous of the quaking figure before him. As he opened his mouth to speak, his pointed beard jabbed forward, causing Sammy to back away.

"So you've come!" barked the figure.

"Er, y-yes, sir," Sammy stammered.

"Well, don't gaze at me, boy. You know who I am?" The strange figure stabbed out the words.

"Y-yes, sir, I mean, er—no-o, sir."

The eyes of the Elizabethan blazed.

"I am Sir Walter Raleigh!" he shouted.

"Sir Walter Raleigh," stuttered Sammy, "but you lived centuries ago. You're a ghost!"

"No, I'm not," was the haughty reply. "We who once spanned the seas can surely span the centuries. I have returned."

Sammy wondered whether he was having a nightmare, or listening to a madman. But the rasping voice continued.

"I have come from a great continent, and have brought something of great value. It is here in this leather pouch. You will deliver it to my agent."

"Your agent?" cried Sammy.

"Yes, yes, my agent," he said irritably. "You know him by the name of Mr. Baxter."

The boy gasped with surprise. So old Baxter, the history master, was in this business somewhere.

The strange character handed Sammy an old, stained leather pouch, tied with red and gold braid, As he did so he charged him—"Guard it well, do not open it in peril of your life. This is going to revolutionise the whole life of England. It will revolutionise it, I say," and his eyes glared. "Now begone!"

The room was suddenly plunged into darkness.

Sammy stumbled along the passage, and through the outer door. He was glad to be in the cool air, and away from that frightening character in the Elizabethan dress! He paused a moment at the garden gate, and brushed the beads of sweat from his brow. If only his fast-beating heart would steady he would go on his way. His mind, too, was in a mad whirl. He leant against the gatepost, dizzy.

His legs felt too weak to support him, and he wished he hadn't come out on this daring errand. Had he minded his own business he would now be safe and warm in his own bed.

Suddenly a great shout of laughter from the vicarage shook the air. Sammy took to his heels and fled. But the laughter seemed to follow him.

Sammy heaved a sigh of relief as he quietly climbed into bed. It was great to be back. He dreamed of Raleigh and Drake playing bowls together. They were using potatoes as bowls, and arguing as to which of the two first found them.

Then Mr. Baxter, looking peculiar in ruffles and lace, informed them of the approach of the Armada.

All very silly, as dreams often are, but disturbing. Sammy woke several times during the night, and each time he felt under the pillow to make sure the pouch he'd been given by Sir Walter was safe!

THE JOKE'S ON SAMMY

AT breakfast Sammy was very quiet. Curiosity burned within him to open the pouch, but fear of Sir Walter's threat prevented him.

"What's the matter, Sammy, you look as if you'd seen a ghost," called Roger across the table, and everyone laughed.

Sammy shuddered at the word "ghost."

"Yes," said Jim, "poor Sammy looks as though he has been out most of the night."

There were more laughs.

Miserable and tired though he felt, Sammy was also sure he was going to have the last laugh. Little did Roger know that he, Sammy, who they all jeered at, was going to blow the top off his big secret. Yes, Mr. Baxter and Roger, and probably other plotters as yet unknown, were about to be unmasked, and Sammy would be the hero of this dangerous adventure.

In the class-room he was occupied with his thoughts. His heart warmed at the prospect of the glory which would be his. He would be a national hero. The Prime Minister would want to see him to thank him. There might even be a decoration. It wasn't every day that a sinister organisation was uncovered. He fingered the leather pouch.

The immediate problem was how, and when, to reveal the plot. He must see Dr. Weston, the Head, or even P.C. Judge at the village police station. Perhaps it would be better if he phoned Whitehall 1212, and have the Flying Squad on the job. Gosh, this was going to make all the other lads sit up and take notice—and envy him.

Suddenly he realised all eyes were upon him, and particularly Mr. Baxter's piercing ones.

"For the third time, Slaker, please pay attention," rapped out Mr. Baxter. "What are you thinking about?"

"Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir," said Sammy simply.

"Sir Walter Raleigh?" queried the master in amazement.

"Yes, sir!"

"Well, seeing we are dealing with Francis Drake, may I ask why you are so pre-occupied with Raleigh?" asked Mr. Baxter in a dangerous tone.

"Because he's come back, sir! I've met him," declared Sammy triumphantly.

Well, old Baxter has brought this on himself, thought Sammy. This is going to be my big moment.

Mr. Baxter stared. His eyes narrowed, and his hands clenched and unclenched.

The master recovered himself a little, and in a hard and brittle voice he asked, "Who did you say you have met?"

"Sir Walter Raleigh, sir—he's down at the old vicarage, and please sir, he sent you this."

Sammy walked to the master's desk, and handed him the leather pouch.

In deathly silence Mr. Baxter cut the braid, and opened the leather roll. His face was white as he held the contents aloft.

"A potato, Slaker—a potato, and not even washed," he spluttered. "Sir Walter sent this, did he?"

Sammy stood aghast.

"I take it from this idea of a practical joke," the master went on, "that you do not agree with yesterday's lesson that Drake, not Raleigh, brought the potato to England."

Sammy's mouth was dry, and his stomach had a peculiar feeling, as he waited for Mr. Baxter's next words.

"As it seems I cannot hammer history into your thick head, I must try and impress it on you in a very different manner. Hand me my cane—now!

• • • • •

At break-time as they hurried to the common-room, Jim and Roger were back-slapping each other, and laughing fit to burst their sides. They were still exploding with glee as they entered the room.

The commotion caused a crowd to gather round Roger. Voices were raised shouting, "Come on Roger, let us into the secret."

"If you don't tell us," said one, "we'll knock your heads together, won't we, chaps?" And he gave a wink to the others.

Jim was the first to simmer down. "It was Roger." he choked out, "He had a brilliant wheeze. He wrote a message to himself." Jim broke off again into a howl of joy.

"Yes, and then dropped it where he knew Sammy was watching," he continued. "Sammy sneaked the note and read it, as Roger guessed he would."

"But who was the joker done up like Sir Walter Raleigh?" someone cried.

"Old Matt Brown from the village," Roger answered. "Jolly good of him to do that bit of acting for us."

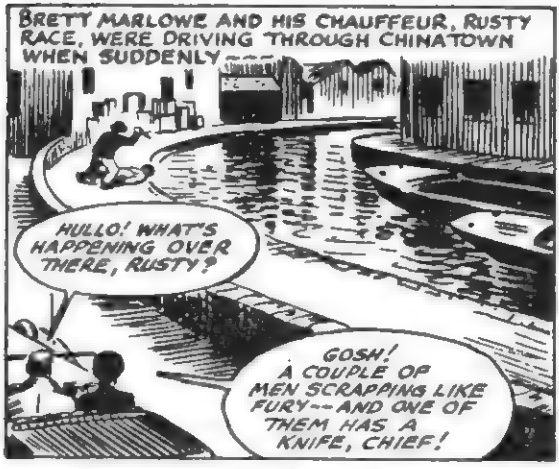
Then turning to Jim, Roger said, "Remember to bring that Elizabethan dress back which you took down to the village for old Matt Brown. We must return it to the school props room before it's missed."

"You bet," agreed Jim. "It will be wanted for the next play. Gosh, perhaps Sammy would like a leading part. We'll ask him. Ha, ha, ha!"

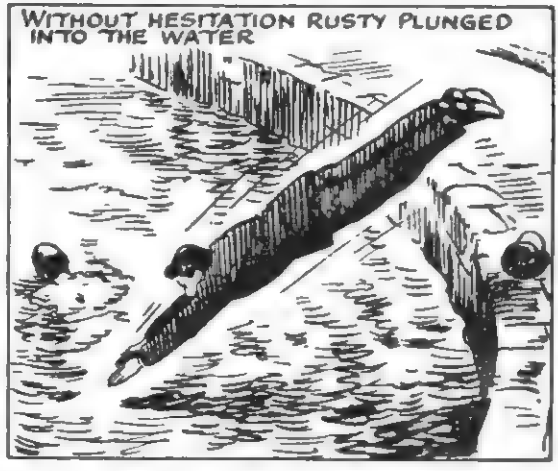
Starring Brett Marlowe, Detective

By JOHN FORDICE

The CASE of the CHINESE IDOL


BRETT MARLOWE AND HIS CHAUFFEUR, RUSTY RACE, WERE DRIVING THROUGH CHINATOWN WHEN SUDDENLY---
HULLO! WHAT'S HAPPENING OVER THERE, RUSTY?
GOSH! A COUPLE OF MEN SCRAPPING LIKE FURY--AND ONE OF THEM HAS A KNIFE, CHIEF!

THE MAN WITH THE KNIFE WAS A CHINESE. PICKING UP HIS VICTIM, HE FLUNG HIM INTO THE CANAL
IT'S MURDER, CHIEF!
THE ONE IN THE WATER MAY STILL BE ALIVE. PULL UP. QUICK!



A POWERFUL SWIMMER, HE SOON BROUGHT THE FIGURE TO THE TOW-PATH
IS HE ALIVE, CHIEF?
NO, RUSTY— AND HE NEVER WAS! WHAT YOU THOUGHT WAS A MAN IS A CHINESE IDOL!

WELL, I'M BLOWED! JUST AN IDOL! WHY ON EARTH DID THAT CHINAMAN THROW IT INTO THE CANAL?
HE HOPED NO ONE WOULD SEE WHAT IT WAS. I RECKON HE WAS LOOKING FOR SOMETHING INSIDE IT. HERE'S THE KNIFE HE USED TO CUT THE BACK OF ITS ROBE

AFTER MAKING SURE THAT THERE WAS NOTHING HIDDEN INSIDE THE IDOL, BRETT EXAMINED THE KNIFE
AH--THERE'S A CHINESE TONG MARK ON THE HANDLE--AND A SCARRED FINGER-PRINT ON THE BLADE.
THESE ARE MOST INTERESTING CLUES, RUSTY. I'LL TAKE THEM ALONG TO OUR OLD FRIEND WU CHEN, THE CURIO DEALER. HE KNOWS EVERYTHING THAT GOES ON IN CHINATOWN, AND MAY BE ABLE TO OFFER SOME EXPLANATION
BRETT AND RUSTY HURRIED THROUGH THE THAMES-SIDE ALLEYS TO A NARROW, DINGY STREET
WU CHEN CURIOS
THAT'S WU CHEN'S SHOP, AND--GREAT GUNS! THERE'S A SMASH AND GRAB RAID GOING ON!
AND THE THIEVES ARE BOTH CHINESE....
THE THING TAKEN FROM WU CHEN'S WINDOW WAS A WINGED BULL MADE OF PORCELAIN. THE MAN WHO HELD IT BROKE IT IN TWO--THEN HURLED THE PIECES ON THE GROUND
CURIOS
HELP! THIEVES!
BEFORE BRETT COULD CATCH UP WITH THEM, THE CHINESE LEAPT INTO A CAR AND WENT SPEEDING OFF
SORRY, WU CHEN. WE'LL NEVER CATCH UP WITH THEM NOW. WHAT DID THEY STEAL?
ONLY THAT WINGED BULL, MR. MARLOWE. AND THEN THEY THREW IT AWAY! IT IS VERY STRANGE, FOR THERE WERE MUCH MORE VALUABLE THINGS IN MY WINDOW
BRETT PICKED UP THE BROKEN PIECES OF THE WINGED BULL
AH, A FINGER-PRINT!
BRETT COMPARED IT WITH THE ONE ON THE KNIFE
THEY'RE EXACTLY THE SAME! THIS PROVES THAT THE SMASH-AND-GRAB RAIDER IS ALSO THE MAN WHO PITCHED THE IDOL INTO THE CANAL

BUT WHY DID THE CHINAMAN THROW THE IDOL INTO THE CANAL, THEN STEAL THE WINGED BULL AND SMASH IT?
THAT, RUSTY, IS A MYSTERY WHICH I AM MOST ANXIOUS TO SOLVE. SOMETHING MIGHTY SINISTER IS BEHIND THESE TWO STRANGE HAPPENINGS
BACK IN WU CHEN'S SHOP, BRETT SHOWED THE CURIO DEALER THE SIGN ON THE KNIFE HANDLE
DOES THAT MEAN ANYTHING TO YOU, WU CHEN?
INDEED, YES, MR. MARLOWE. IT IS THE MARK OF A TONG -- A SECRET SOCIETY WHICH IS VERY POWERFUL IN CHINA. BUT I KNOW OF NO MEMBERS IN ENGLAND
BRETT PONDERED FOR A WHILE - THEN PULLED A MORNING PAPER FROM HIS POCKET
ACCORDING TO THE SHIPPING NEWS A CHINESE SHIP DOCKED IN LONDON YESTERDAY. WE'LL TAKE A LOOK AT HER, RUSTY
SHIPPING NEWS
YOU THINK SOME MEMBERS OF THE SECRET SOCIETY MAY BE AMONG THE CREW, EH, CHIEF? GEE -- THAT'S QUITE LIKELY!
THEY SOON LOCATED THE SHIP AT ONE OF THE DOCKS
THERE SHE IS - TAKING COAL ABOARD
AND THERE'S SO MUCH DUST ON SOME OF THE CREW THAT THEY'RE AS BLACK AS NEGROES!
EVEN IF THE CHAPS WE'RE AFTER ARE ABOARD, WE MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO SPOT THEM, CHIEF
WE'LL HANG AROUND FOR A BIT AND KEEP OUR EYES SKINNED

BRETT WAITED UNTIL WORK STOPPED ON THE SHIP
CAFE
THEY'RE ALL GOING TO THAT CAFE FOR A DRINK
THAT GIVES US OUR CHANCE. WE'LL FOLLOW THEM INSIDE
IN THE CAFE BRETT AND RUSTY PEERED KEENLY AROUND
OUR LUCK'S IN. I'M ALMOST SURE THOSE ARE THE TWO WHO PINCHED THE WINGED BULL
GOOD! WE'LL TAKE THE EMPTY SEATS AT THE NEXT TABLE
SOON AFTERWARDS BRETT NOTICED SOMETHING THAT MADE HIS EYES GLEAM
SEE THAT, RUSTY? THE WAITER'S SLIPPING ONE OF THEM A NOTE
THE CHINAMAN PUT THE NOTE IN HIS POCKET. THEN, HAVING HAD HIS DRINK, HE WENT OUT WITH THE OTHERS
HE'S LEFT A BLACK FINGER-PRINT ON THE CUP. IT MAY HELP US TO CHECK UP ON HIM
WHEN BRETT EXAMINED IT HE FOUND HE WAS RIGHT
IT'S THE SAME PRINT AS THAT ON THE KNIFE AND THE WINGED BULL!
YES, RUSTY, HE'S OUR MAN. AND WE KNOW HE WAS GIVEN A SECRET MESSAGE, WE'LL FOLLOW HIM!

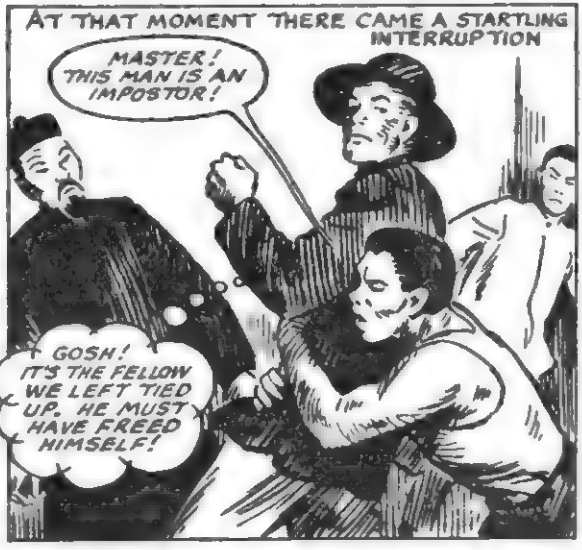
OUTSIDE THE CAFE, THE CHINAMAN LEFT THE OTHER SEAMEN AND WALKED QUICKLY AWAY
I'M CONVINCED THE CHINESE SECRET SOCIETY IS ABOUT TO STRIKE A BLOW IN ENGLAND, RUSTY. ON NO ACCOUNT MUST WE LOSE SIGHT OF THAT SEAMAN
WHEN THEY TURNED THE NEXT CORNER, HOWEVER, THE CHINAMAN WASN'T TO BE SEEN UNTIL --
LOOK OUT, CHIEF!
THE MYSTERIOUS CHINAMAN STARTED TO RUN AWAY. BUT RUSTY WAS TOO QUICK FOR HIM
GOT YOU!
THEN BRETT JOINED IN!
IT WAS A K.O.--AND IN NEXT TO NO TIME BRETT HAD FOUND THE SECRET MESSAGE IN THE MAN'S POCKET
NOW TO SEE WHAT IT SAYS
IT'S A MESSAGE FROM THE TONG. BUT WHAT THE DEUCE DOES IT MEAN, CHIEF?
BENEATH THE BIRD THAT DOES NOT FLY — AT 3 O'CLOCK
I THINK I KNOW, RUSTY

THAT'S THE PLACE!
THE OSTRICH
THE OSTRICH? WHY, OF COURSE! THE BIRD THAT DOES NOT FLY! THE TONG MUST BE HOLDING A MEETING THERE
WITH RUSTY'S HELP, BRETT CARRIED THE UNCONSCIOUS CHINAMAN TOWARDS AN OPEN WAREHOUSE
WE'LL DUMP HIM IN THERE. THEN I'LL CHANGE INTO HIS CLOTHES AND TAKE HIS PLACE AT 3 O'CLOCK IN THE INN. WHATEVER HAPPENS THERE SHOULD ENABLE ME TO SOLVE THE WHOLE MYSTERY OF THE IDOL AND THE WINGED BULL!
BRETT DONNED THE CHINAMAN'S CLOTHES. RUSTY THEN SMEARED THE TEC'S FACE WITH DUST
THERE YOU ARE, CHIEF. NO ONE WOULD RECOGNISE YOU NOW. BUT YOU'LL HAVE TO BE MIGHTY CAREFUL!
BRETT WAS ABOUT TO GO TO THE INN. BUT SUDDENLY HE DREW BACK INTO COVER
QUIET, RUSTY! THERE ARE TWO CHINAMEN WHEELING AN ANTIQUE CHEST THIS WAY
THE CHINAMEN STOPPED OUTSIDE THE INN
NOBODY LOOK. IN WE GO
I WONDER IF THEY'RE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE SECRET SOCIETY?
THE DOOR OF THE INN OPENED AND THE TWO CHINAMEN SLIPPED INSIDE, TAKING THE CHEST WITH THEM
ONE OF THEM KNOCKED FOUR TIMES, RUSTY. THAT MUST BE A SIGNAL TO SHOW THEY'RE MEMBERS OF THE SECRET SOCIETY. I'LL GET IN THE SAME WAY. NOW, LISTEN -- THIS IS WHAT I WANT YOU TO DO...
WHILE RUSTY WENT OFF TO OBEY HIS CHIEF'S INSTRUCTIONS, BRETT KNOCKED FOUR TIMES ON THE DOOR. IT OPENED
THIS WAY, PLEASE
BRETT WAS SHOWN INTO A LARGE ROOM
AH! A TONG MEETING - JUST AS I THOUGHT!
YOU HAVE DONE WELL, MY BROTHERS, TO FIND THE CHEST SO SOON. OPEN IT!

I'M CERTAIN THIS CHEST IS LINKED WITH THE IDOL AND THE WINGED BULL.

FROM THE CHEST THE CHINAMEN LIFTED A STONE DRAGON
THE MAN WHO TOOK THAT WHICH WE SEEK HID IT IN ONE OF THREE CURIOS SENT FROM CHINA -- THE IDOL, THE WINGED BULL, OR THIS DRAGON. IT WASN'T IN THE FIRST TWO--SO IT MUST BE IN THE DRAGON!

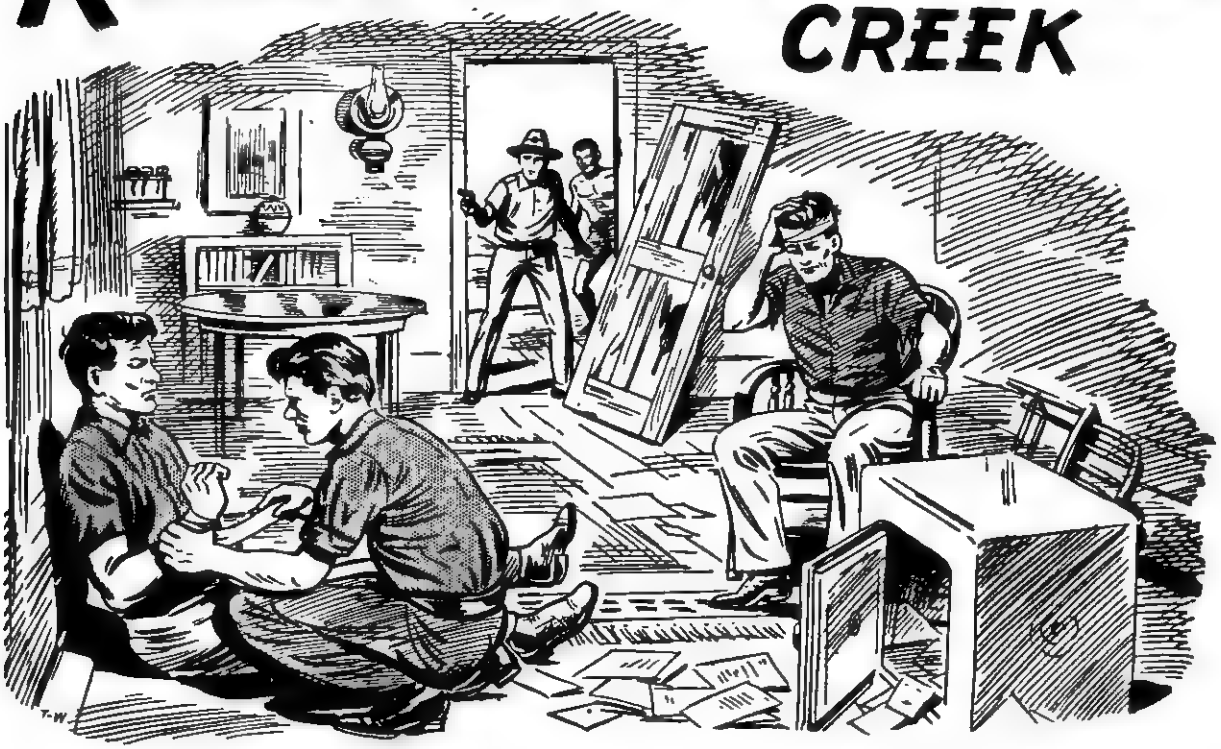
THE TONG LEADER UNSCREWED THE DRAGON'S HEAD
PHEW! I RECOGNISE THAT DIAMOND. IT'S THE ONE WHICH WAS STOLEN FROM THE TEMPLE OF SHAN WA! NOW TO DEAL WITH THESE CROOKS!


AT THAT MOMENT THERE CAME A STARTLING INTERRUPTION
MASTER! THIS MAN IS AN IMPOSTOR!
GOSH! IT'S THE FELLOW WE LEFT TIED UP. HE MUST HAVE FREED HIMSELF!

BRETT DIDN'T SAY A WORD; HE ACTED!

OUTSIDE THE INN, RUSTY GAVE A PIERCING WHISTLE
THE CHIEF'S IN TROUBLE. GOOD JOB HE TOLD ME TO PREPARE FOR IT!
BRETT WAS PUTTING UP A FIERCE FIGHT WHEN RUSTY DASHED IN--WITH THE POLICE!
WE'LL SOON DEAL WITH THIS LOT, CHIEF! I TIPPED OFF THE COPS TO BE READY, AS YOU TOLD ME TO
COME ON, LADS!
SO MUCH FOR YOU! NEED ANY HELP, RUSTY?
I'M DOING FINE, CHIEF!
WHEN THE CROOKS HAD BEEN ROUNDED UP, BRETT SHOWED RUSTY THE VALUABLE DIAMOND
IT'S A BEAUTY, CHIEF! AND YOU SAY ONE OF THE GANG IN CHINA SENT IT TO THIS COUNTRY?
YES. AND NOW IT'S GOING BACK TO THE TEMPLE WHERE IT BELONGS
THE END.

ROBBERY AT WOOLSHED CREEK



By Guy Deakin

STAMPEDE!

"GET cracking on the pedal-generator, Jolli. It's time for my nightly natter over the radio with Woolshed Creek."

Trooper Tom Donnelly, of the Australian Northern Territory Mounted Police Patrol, knocked out his pipe on the verandah rail of his lonely one-man Police Post. Jolli, his aborigine police boy, the finest black tracker in the Territory, grinned. He mounted the bicycle-seat of the pedal generator, which supplied current for the Post's radio.

"You call up Mister Patten, boss of Woolshed cattle station?" he asked Tom.

"I sure am, Jolli." Tom laughed as he looked over at the radio transmitter. "Him and me are cobbers. He's eight hours' hard riding south of the Post, but the radio keeps us in touch."

The tropical sun was just going down as Tom strode across the tiny wooden shack to the radio. In the velvety sky brilliant stars were beginning to glow. From the lonely bush country all around the Police Post rose the night cries of galahs, emus, and cockatoos.

Jolli began to pedal the generator, his black head bobbing up and down with the vigour of his efforts. Tom chuckled at his black tracker's enthusiasm. Jolli never ceased marvelling at the radio, which he called, "Whitefella's magic ju-ju which made voices speak from far."

"Police Post callin' Woolshed Creek." Tom spoke into the mouthpiece of the transmitter. "Come in, Woolshed."

He switched over to receiving.

"Woolshed answering Police Post," was the reply, instantly and clearly. "Hullo, Tom. Patten here. Crumbs, Tom, but it's been real hot out here in the grasslands, today. Grass is dry as tinder. My boys—Hey, look out . . ."

"CRACK!"

Tom tensed. What was wrong at Woolshed? That had been a shot he had heard. Swiftly, he switched over to sending.

"Woolshed—Woolshed," he cried, his voice anxious. "What's going on at your station? What's wrong, Patten? Come in, Woolshed! Over," and he switched back to receiving.

Trooper Tom on the Peril-Packed Trail of Australian Bush Bandits

With furrowed brow he waited for a reply. None came. Again he called Woolshed Creek cattle station, far in the outback, in the midst of the wide-spread grass country. Only silence answered.

Tom switched off the radio. Jolli eyed him anxiously.

"There's big trouble way out at Woolshed," Tom snapped, jumping to his feet and snatching down his slouch hat. "Saddle up, Jolli."

"We go Woolshed, boss?"

"Sure do—fast as the horses can take us," was the reply. "But it will be sun-up before we make Woolshed Creek cattle station. It will be an all-night ride, Jolli."

"We ride light, boss?" Jolli asked, as he hurriedly jumped from the pedal-generator. "We no take swag?"

"No, Jolli, no blanket rolls. Only water and tucker, and—guns!"

Jolli sped across the night-shrouded compound of the Police Post to the stables. In a few moments he was leading Tom's horse, Ace, and his own horse, Dash, into the open. In the starlit Australian night the two fine police horses' coats glowed healthily.

With a soft word to Ace, Tom set off, Jolli at his side. Very soon the Police Post was far behind them as they raced across the hard, pebbly desert of the barren gibber plain. The gibbers, small stones, cracked under the horses' hooves. Large lizards—known as goannas—and snakes slid rapidly from their path.

Twice only did they stop, to water and rest the horses. As the sun at last swept the stars from the sky, Tom pointed ahead.

"Grass country," he called out to Jolli. "Be at Woolshed in an hour. Hey—take a look, Jolli. On that hill, way over there."

The keen eyed tracker followed Tom's pointing hand as they rode on. He peered intently, then nodded.

"I see, boss. Men on horses. They see us. They ridin' down side of hill, to big herd of cattle."

Tom, bent low over his speeding horse, gazed through narrowed eyes at the distant bunch of riders. Despite the distance, he knew that they were not Woolshed Creek men. And—why were they chasing at an all-out pace towards the huge, wide spread of cattle which was between them and Tom?

Suddenly, the vast herd began to move. The bunch of riders was pounding down on the herd, yelling and firing their guns. With bellows of fright, the herd turned.

Tom reined Ace to a halt. Swiftly he cast a glance at the roaring, pounding avalanche of cattle, tearing at the speed of an express train straight for him and Jolli.

"That bunch of riders has deliberately started a stampede," Tom roared. "They're trying to kill us, Jolli. But by jiminy, they shan't succeed—the murderous thugs. Scram, Jolli. Our horses can beat the stampede."

They jerked their horses round. Together they raced, side by side, the thunderous roar of the pursuing herd searing the tropical dawn air.

"O—oo—yow . . ."

With a desperate yell, Jolli reared Dash on to its haunches.

A snake was flashing its evil head directly in its path. Dash swerved—and fell. Jolli crashed from the saddle. The snake shot away.

Tom pulled Ace to a halt. He leapt off and tore across to Jolli. The black tracker lay prone and half-conscious.

Tom cast a swift eye at the stampeding herd. There was no time to remount. A thousand thundering hooves would be upon him and Jolli in a matter of moments. And, far behind the herd, Tom caught a brief glimpse of the men who had started the stampede. They had turned and were riding away, as hard as they could go.

"Those crooks deliberately started the stampede, to wipe me and Jolli out," Tom told himself, his thoughts running at lightning speed. His jaw set grimly. "But we aren't done yet."

His hand streaked into his pocket There was not a second to lose. So near was the crushing wall of maddened animals that Tom could see the redness of terror in their eyes.

He stooped. A match flickered in his hand. There was a spurt of flame as he put the match to the bleached grass.

Next instant a tongue of fire raced across the sun-dried grass. Behind it, Tom stood, Jolli at his feet, watching tensely. Would his desperate plan succeed? Would the smoke and flames turn the herd to one side?

The cattle came on—then, suddenly, the leaders saw the peril. Flames, rich and red, pouring out black smoke, licked in a wall of menacing death in front of the herd's centre. With wild bellows of fright, the herd parted—and pounded on to either side of the two pals.

Suddenly, all was silence. The cattle had gone.

Tom wasted no time. Swiftly he beat down the flames which had saved him and his black tracker from a terrible death.

"Stampede nearly kill boss and me," Jolli gasped. "Boss save my life."

"You'd have done the same for me, cobber," Tom grunted. He asked himself a series of baffling questions. "Why did those crooks try to kill us, I'd like to know? And—who are they? Are they anything to do with the shot I heard over the radio

just before it went silent, when I was talking to Woolshed Creek cattle station?"

Jolli was shaking his head in bewilderment. Tom stared intently in the direction from which the cattle had started their stampede. Of the crooks there was now no sign. They had fled.

The black tracker quickly recovered their two horses, and a few minutes later they were astride them and racing towards Woolshed Creek.

Tom reined Ace to a halt at the foot of the cattle station's verandah steps. He leapt from the saddle and tore into the ranch-house living room. Abruptly, he halted.

Mr. Patten sat in a chair, a bandage on his head. One of his two sons lay propped against a wall, having a wounded arm bandaged by his brother. Nearby was a safe, its door wide open. It was empty!

With expert hands Tom attended to the two wounded men. Very soon he and Jolli had them conscious and comfortable.

"A bunch of bandits broke in on us as I was talkin' to you over the radio, Tom," Mr. Patten groaned. "They shot us—then robbed the safe. There was a year's pay-roll for my men in it."

"Must be the same gang that stampeded the cattle," Tom snapped, his eyes flashing.

He strode out on to the verandah and stared across the endless expense of grasslands. In which direction had the crooks gone? How could he track them—and recover the stolen money?

"Those crooks aren't going to get away with their crimes," Tom vowed, clenching his fists determinedly. "Sure as I'm Trooper Tom Donnelly, of the Mounted Patrol, I'll bring the whole bunch o' them to justice—and regain the stolen pay-roll!"

THE TRAIL'S END

"FIND tracks, Jolli—and find 'em quick." After assuring himself that the wounded cattle station owner and his sons were now reasonably fit, Tom tore across the grassland to where he had last glimpsed the escaping safe-robbing gang, after they had stampeded the cattle.

Jolli rode round, in an ever-increasing circle, hanging over Dash's flank, peering intently at the ground. He was out to *prove* that there was no better black tracker in all Northern Australia!

Then Tom sat quietly watching while the alert-eyed Jolli searched.

"Me find, boss. Plenty tracks. Six whitefella—they ride that way," Jolli pointed into the distance.

"Good work, Jolli," Tom praised. The black tracker grinned with delight. "They're heading towards the river. Let's go."

The crooks had a long start with their loot. They believed that Trooper Tom and his black tracker had been killed by the hooves of the stampeding herd. Tom was determined to give them a shattering surprise.

Into sight came the tops of coolabar trees. The river was nearby. It lay on the other side of a range of boulder-strewn hills. The trail led to the foot of the shale-covered hillside.

Jolli halted, peering around. His face puckered.

"No see tracks, boss," he muttered, leaping from Dash and closely scrutinising the pebbly ground. "Bad whitefellas ride up hills. Horses make stones slip down, hide trail they make."

"O.k., Jolli," Tom murmured. "Maybe we'll pick up the trail again on top or over the other side of the hills. Let's go!" And he spurred Ace up the slipping stones. "I figure those crooks aren't so far ahead of us now."

Over the hills they rode, to the far side. But of the crooks there was no sign. Tom stood up in his stirrups, gazing all around him. Below lay the broad, fast-running river, tearing towards the distant falls. Tom could see clouds of spray from the falls, and faintly he could hear their thunder.

Suddenly Jolli tensed, lifted his head, and sniffed.

"What is it, Jolli?" Tom asked sharply.

"Me smell cooking," Jolli muttered.

Tom sniffed hard—but he could smell nothing. Jolli again sniffed, his keen nostrils quivering. Slowly he turned his head.

His eyes fixed intently on a dark opening in a cliff, ahead of them. He turned, and beckoned to Tom.

"Smell of cooking—it come from there," he whispered.

Tom stared. It looked like a cave in the foot of the cliff.

"Jumping jack-rabbits!" he exclaimed in an excited whisper. "You're right Jolli. I can smell it myself, now. The crooks must be in that cave, cooking a meal. Come on, we'll investigate."

Stealthily Tom crept to the cliff. Cautiously he peered into the dark opening. The smell of cooking was now strong—but there was no sign of a fire . . . or the crooks.

Tom frowned in puzzlement. Where were the crooks?

Daringly he stepped into the cave, then halted in surprise.

The opening wasn't a cave—it was a natural tunnel.

Quietly he stole along it. He halted suddenly. The tunnel ran right through the cliff, and came out on the bank of the fast-running river. The crooks were seated at that end of the tunnel, around their cooking fire, greedily consuming a meal they had cooked.

While Tom cautiously surveyed the scene from his hiding place in the tunnel, he had a daring idea.

He hurried back to where Jolli was waiting.

"Jolli, the crooks are at the other end of the tunnel. We're going to smoke 'em out. Collect a pile of green brushwood, place it at this end of the tunnel, and light it. The wind will carry it through the tunnel, like a chimney. Stay here and keep the fire going."

"Yes, boss," Jolli grinned. "What you goin' to do, boss?"

"Surprise 'em," Tom chuckled, leaping on to Ace's back.

He spurred Ace down a steep path, through a gully, to the river bank below.

Quietly he dismounted and crept along the cliff until he saw the exit to the tunnel. The swift-flowing river was only a few feet away. He crouched behind a bush, a few yards from the opening. He could hear the crooks talking. He smiled grimly. They were due for a shock.

Then there were yells of alarm. Curls of smoke swept out of the tunnel, followed by a choking cloud.

From the tunnel staggered the crooks, spluttering and gasping for breath. Tom's jaw set. One of the bandits was carrying a canvas bag. The stolen payroll!

Tom stepped from behind the bush, gun in hand.

"Put up your hands," he roared. "And drop your guns."

Startled, the crooks spun round, gaping at the sight of the Trooper facing them with gun levelled. Slowly they threw their guns to the ground and raised their hands . . . all except the bandit with the canvas money bag. He was the leader.

Snarling, he tossed the bag away, towards the racing river.

In a wide arc, the canvas bag sailed far out, across the river. It fell with a splash into the racing waters!

What should Tom do? He *must* recover the money. But if he went after it—then it would give the crooks the chance they sought to escape. The leader of the gang grinned cunningly, as he watched Tom.

He knew he'd set Tom a tricky problem—and he chuckled gloatingly!

It seemed certain that Trooper Tom and Jolli would be killed by the hooves of the stampeding herd. Suddenly Tom struck a match—and put it to the dry grass in front of him!

WATERFALL PERIL

TOM'S brain worked furiously. And it was a match for the gang leader's scheming. He whistled to Ace. The horse came galloping from where Tom had concealed it.

Swiftly Tom leapt into the saddle. Before the crooks could snatch up their guns from the ground he was out of range—tearing along the river bank after the fast disappearing canvas bag.

He threw a quick glance over his shoulder. He was sure the crooks would trail him in the hope of recovering their loot. But he was already round a bend, and they were lost to sight behind him.

Ace raced level with the drifting money bag. It was in mid-stream, bobbing up and down in the pounding waves rushing towards the thundering falls.

Tom didn't hesitate, despite the terrible peril. He swerved Ace to the river. The gallant horse responded immediately—and with a flying leap launched itself into the water. Desperately it swam towards the floating bag.

"Come on, Ace," Tom murmured, lying low over his horse's back. "We've got to recover the bag. Come on, old fellow."

Nearer and nearer the bag bobbed, and nearer to the falls. Fearlessly Ace swam on, all the time being

carried faster and faster downstream towards the brink of the mighty, rock-strewn falls. To be swept over their lip meant certain death on the boulders below!

Tom glanced anxiously ahead. His mouth set grimly. He mustn't endanger Ace's life. It wouldn't be fair to his old pal.

He slid from Ace's back, into the water.

"Back, Ace," he ordered. "Back to the bank, cobber. This has got to be a solo act from here on."

Obediently the well-trained Police horse turned and struck for the bank. Tom shot forward, swimming with desperate speed to intercept the canvas bag before it was carried beyond his reach and over the falls.

Flying spume and flailing water filled his eyes and mouth, but grimly he swam on, straining every nerve. Nearer and nearer floated the canvas bag—but could he reach it before it was swept away?

Tom made a final effort. The bag was in his hand! With a grunt of triumph he slid it beneath his tunic. The roar of the falls was in his ears as he turned; for a brief second he glimpsed their brink. He was dangerously near.

Fighting every inch, Tom forced himself against the tearing grip of the onrushing current. Gasping, muscles strained to their utmost, he fought his way to the bank, and hauled himself from the water, Ace trotted to him, nuzzled him affectionately.

"We've—done it—cobber," Tom panted, rising to his feet and patting Ace's neck. He stood holding Ace's pommel while he cast a swift eye along the bank.

"We've got to trick those bandits, Ace," he muttered.

He slid his hand inside his tunic and loosened the top of the money bag. He pulled the bundles of notes from the bag, and slipped them into the leather saddle bag.

"O.k., Ace," he whispered. "The pay-roll is in your saddle now, cobber, but the crooks haven't seen me put it there. And—this is where we're going to try and fool 'em."

Grimly he smiled to himself and tugged the empty canvas bag from under his tunic, climbed into the saddle, and slung the bag across it. From under his hat his eyes peered keenly ahead as he spurred Ace into a fast gallop, back along the river bank.

Tom's gaze sharpened. The crooks had followed him from the cave. Up on a hill ahead, he caught a brief glimpse of a flash. It was the brilliant, blinding sun reflected from the barrel of a gun.

"Guess they rode up there, hoping to see if I rescued the canvas bag," he thought. "Now they'll try to get it back. Come on, Ace. This is where we do some hard riding."

The crooks broke from cover. They came sweeping down the hillside, towards the river bank. Tom guessed their plan. It was to intercept him, before he could join up with Jolli, near the cave.

A gun barked. Its shot splashed into the river. Tom smiled grimly. The shooting was wild, but as the crooks converged towards him, it would become dangerous.

Tom's plan was to let the crooks believe he had the money in the bag.

Ahead of him, Tom saw a crack in the wall of the cliff. It was just wide enough for a mounted man to ride into. It gave Tom a daring idea.

He swerved Ace towards the crevasse. At its narrow entrance he slowed the horse to a walk. Carefully, Tom steered Ace into the slit which ran from top to bottom of the cliff.

The crevasse went deep into the cliff, then opened out into a circular-shaped basin, large enough to hold a dozen men and horses. Tom nodded with satisfaction. It was just the place for his plan!

He leapt to the ground and thrust the empty money bag into a small hole. Swiftly he covered it with sand. He vaulted back into the saddle and sped back to the crevasse. A few moments later he raced from the narrow opening, back on to the river bank.

A shout from above told him the crooks had seen him. Daringly, he whipped Ace round, scanning the hills as though he wasn't sure where the crooks were. By doing this, he let the bandits have a full view of his saddle, from which the bag had now gone. A burst of shots spattered around him.

"O.k., Ace," he yelled. "Let's go. They've spotted us, my old cobber. Let's see if they'll fall for my trick!"

Away he sped. Behind him the crooks pounded down to the river bank. Tom glanced back. The bandits were racing towards the crevasse, just as he had schemed.

Round a bend of the bank came Jolli, mounted on Dash.

"Me much worried 'bout you, boss," he cried, racing to Tom's side. "Me see tracks, tell me you hold up bandits—then boss ride fast away, leave bandits. Me no understand. What happen, boss?"

Tom told him, then pointed to the crevasse.

"The crooks have ridden in there, Jolli. Now is our chance to trap 'em. They think I've hidden the payroll in there."

"We catch 'em," Jolli cried excitedly. "What boss's plan?"

Tom spurred Ace up the steep side of the hill, Jolli following. At the top, Tom reined his horse to a halt, dismounted, and crept to where the ground dropped sheer away. Cautiously, they poked their

heads over the edge. Tom's face creased into a grin. Jolli chuckled.

Below, the gang was frantically searching the basin-shaped opening for the canvas money bag. For a few moments Tom's eyes twinkled with silent laughter as he watched their fruitless hunt. Jolli was smothering his mouth, his body shaking with merriment.

Tom's face became stern. He whipped out his gun. Levelling it, he covered the crooks below who were angrily jostling each other.

"Drop your guns—and get your hands up," he roared. He fired a couple of shots into the ground at their feet.

Startled, frightened faces peered upward—and the crooks hurriedly tossed their guns to the ground.

"O.k., Jolli," Tom ordered. "Get down the hill, and into the crevasse. Collect their guns. And then—we'll ride 'em all back to Woolshed, and return the payroll to its owner."

The outlaw gang stumbled from the smoke-filled cave. As soon as the leader saw Trooper Tom, he hurled the bag of bank notes into the fast-flowing river. How could Tom recover the loot now?

With a wide grin, Jolli turned to obey.

"Yes, boss," nodded gleefully. "Then take bad whitefellas and lock up?"

"You bet," Tom replied. "We'll lock 'em in the cells, sure."

Tom kept his revolver trained on the gang while Jolli hurried down the steep hillside, along the foot of the cliff, to the crevasse. The black tracker trotted into the opening in the cliff and cheerfully commenced to collect the bandits' guns from the ground.

He had reached the bandit leader and was stooping to pick up his gun when, suddenly, the crook brushed a foot across the loose sand. Sand spurted upwards—and Jolli reeled back, eyes smarting.

With a triumphant yell, the crook leader leapt. Next instant he had snatched his gun from the ground, whirled, and pointed it upwards. His fingers closed on the trigger. But before he could fire—

Crack!

A single shot smacked through the air. There was a dull thud, a shriek—and the bandit's gun was spinning out of his hand.

Tom's cool eyes had taken swift aim—and with one quick shot he had targetted the crook's gun butt. The crook wrung his stinging hand in agony.

Tom smiled grimly while Jolli angrily shepherded the gang and their leader together and kept them covered. Tom then raced down the hillside and into the crevasse.

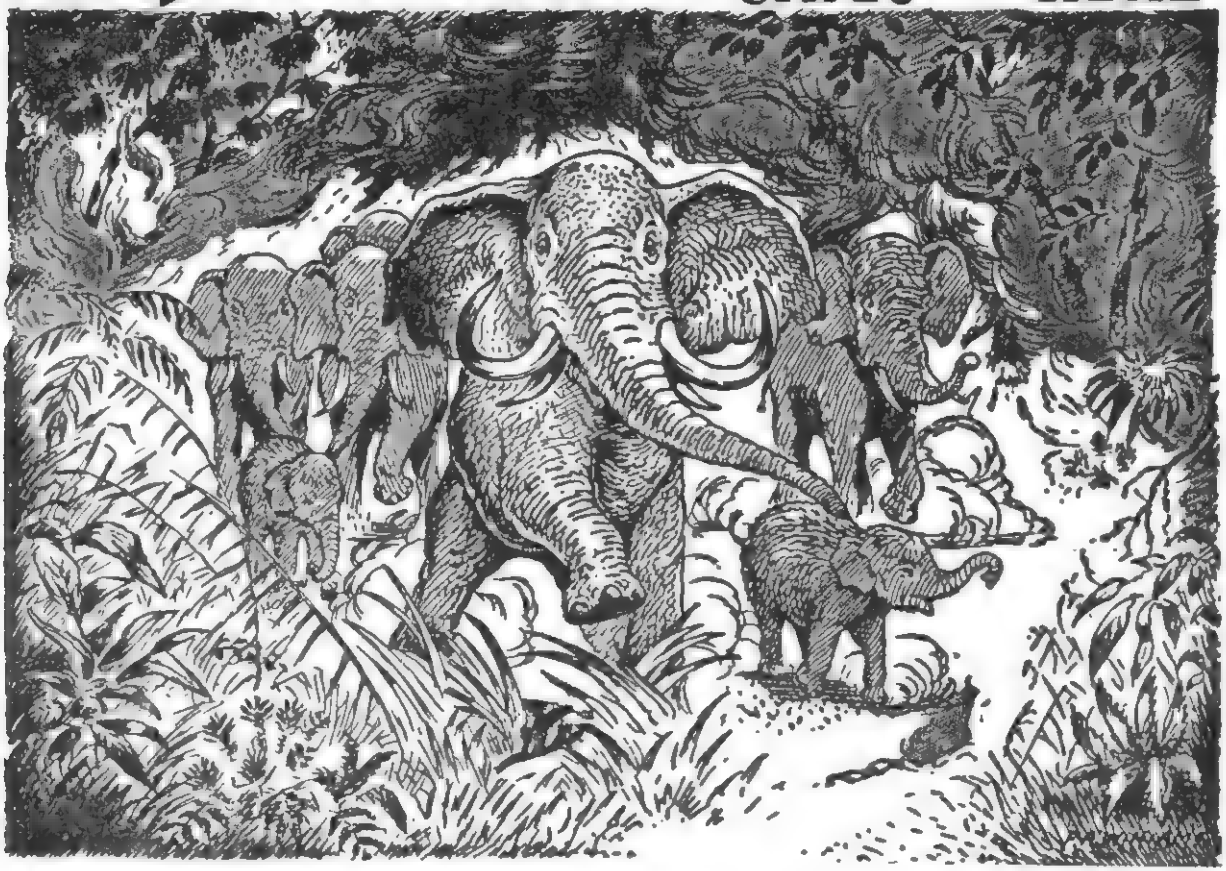
The gang eyed him glumly.

"O.k., you bunch of jackaroos," he snapped, "put out your wrists." The next moment the six bandits were roped together in a single file. "Right. Now back to your horses, and get going. The jail's the place for you."

And as the safe-breakers rode from the crevasse, under the cover of Tom's and Jolli's guns, Jolli was grinning.

His master had won the day, and beaten a gang of desperate villains. Jolli felt proud to be Trooper Tom's black tracker!

MIGHTY MABU SAVES the HERD



THE SEARCH FOR WATER

By Mark Aldridge

IT was mid-afternoon. The sky was cloudless. No wind raised the dust on the veld. Only among the yellow fever trees that bordered the dry bed of the Roko River was there movement.

The branches tossed and swayed as if a hurricane shook them. Occasionally there was a crash as a tree was uprooted.

On the outer edge of the trees, a vast grey shape stood motionless. It was Mabu, Master of the Herd. He stood alone on guard while the herd fed. Mabu, the Wise One, as the Zulus called him, was thirteen feet at the shoulders, and the spread of his ears when they stood out sideways was sixteen feet from tip to tip.

From his lower jaw four great tusks curled upwards, each of them seven feet long and as thick as a man's thigh. It was because of these tusks that Mabu was Master of the Herd. No animal could stand against their onslaught. But even without them he would have been Master.

Not without foundation did the Zulus call him Wise One. Behind his little dark eyes was a brain full of cunning, and a memory as deep as the waters of Lake Otjikoto.

Among the African elephants the four-tuskers are rare. Once in a lifetime there might be one. They have wisdom beyond other elephants.

Mabu's great brain was working now. He did not eat because there was little enough already on the fever trees. He was ensuring that there would be sufficient for the cows and the young animals.

But it was the future that was worrying Mabu. The rains had not come when they should, and the veld was parched and dusty. In the forests there was little feeding either, for the trees were withered. Mabu had led the herd from the forest because he knew the danger of a forest fire in the dry weather.

He was leading the herd towards the rain forests of the northern mountains. There they would find

Elephant Herd-Leader's Great Battle of Wits with Cunning Zulu Hunters

food and water instead of the barren dryness of the veld.

But for the first time Mabu met rebellion in the herd. To get to the rain forest they had had to travel through a broad belt of dry sakari: dense, waterless bush. Some of the younger bulls had sought to break aside, to lead the herd to where they thought they could find water. Mabu had stamped out the rebellion with his tusks and his flailing trunk.

Yet the young bulls were still against him. The herd had been almost out of control as it rushed towards the river bed. When it was found to be dry, wild and furious were the wailings and trumpetings.

There was enough moisture left in the wizened leaves of the fever trees, Mabu knew, to prevent his herd from dying of thirst. But he knew he must find water soon. If he failed, not even he could keep the herd together. They would break up, each seeking water where it might seem best to look. Then the herd would never reach the rain forests—and safety.

As his trunk waved gently, searching the air for the first scent of danger, Mabu was calculating in his mind how long it would take to reach water. Two days' march, he reckoned. But some of the herd could not last two days without water.

There were angry trumpetings behind him, and he swung round to find two of the young bulls fighting over the last branch of the trees. Angrily he trumpeted at them. Then he charged.

His shoulder hit one, a savage beast that was almost full-grown and had one broken tusk. It was sent sprawling on its side.

Mabu's trunk seized the other elephant's neck and shook it. Then Mabu walked majestically back to the edge of the trees.

His ears spread wide suddenly to pick up a faint sound he had heard. His trunk curled up to sniff at the air. The sound swept closer swiftly. It was the wind from the south.

The wind had brought the scent of water—water that was not far away.

But over the scent of water there was another scent which made Mabu's great forefeet lift up and down in anger, as if he was trampling something. It was the smell of Man.

Mabu did not fear Man for himself but for the herd. He had encountered Man many times. He had not always come off unscathed. Neither had Man.

More important than fear now was water. The smell of Man meant the chance of danger. The lack of water meant certain death for the weakest of the herd.

Mabu had to take the risk. The water must be found!

The brief dusk of the tropics had come and gone before Mabu led the herd southwards. He knew that in the dark there was less danger from Man.

Others had caught the scent of water, and they moved behind Mabu along the dry bed of the river in an eager, jostling throng. Many times Mabu had to trumpet angrily to preserve the young calves from being trampled.

To most of the herd the smell of Man meant nothing, for Mabu had always led them into country which was uninhabited. They did not understand the dangers. They did not know why he warned them to silence with short, soft trumpetings.

The herd was almost stampeding down the dry bed as the smell of water grew stronger. Water was all the other elephants smelled. But to Mabu the scent of Man was overpowering. With it he smelled other things. There was a whiff of wood smoke, and the scents of cattle and goats. A village!

There would be many men. There would be much danger!

BROKEN-TUSK THE REBEL

THE water was just ahead. His short-sighted eyes saw the gleam in the moonlight. Completely out of control, the herd rushed forward. Eagerly they splashed into the one hole that still held water. Deeply they drank, thrusting their trunks down and sucking up gallons at a time to squirt down their thoats.

Watchfully Mabu circled the waterhole. Twice he charged through the milling herd to snatch a youngster up and set it on its feet.

Not until some of the young bulls had stopped drinking and begun playfully to squirt water over each other did Mabu drink. Then he drank deep. He knew now that there was plenty.

Three of the young bulls were sniffing the wind that came towards them from the village. There was an enticing smell of food on the air, the smell of something fresh and green. They had not tasted anything fresh or green for many dry and dusty days.

They could smell a field of young mealies. Alone of all the village crops this still survived. It was watered by a channel from the waterhole.

The three young tuskers, led by the one with the broken tusk, moved out of the waterhole towards the mealies. Suddenly they were halted. A vast shape had loomed up ahead of them.

It was Mabu. He had expected that some of the herd would be tempted by the smell of the mealies.

Only Mabu realised the danger that lay in feeding from such food. He knew that the mealies belonged to Man. When he was very young he had been in a herd which had raided a mealie field. He remembered Man's relentless pursuit, in which many of his companions had died.

The three bulls stood doggedly as Mabu ordered them back to the herd. They were not going. They smelled food.

With a short, angry trumpet Mabu lurched forward. He pinned the ringleader, the one with the broken tusk, against a tall chamfuta tree.

Mabu then whirled at the other two young bulls. They immediately fled back to the herd!

Mabu stood on guard again.

His ears heard every sound that passed on the soft night wind. No scent escaped his trunk as it waved slowly above his head.

He splashed suddenly across the pool. A small calf, only a few months old, had wandered from its mother towards the edge of the trees.

As Mabu swung it back towards the pool there was a disappointed snarl from the shadows.

But not even Shimba the lion dared face Mabu, Master of the Herd.

Only when he looked over the herd again did Mabu realise that something was wrong. There were not enough beasts in the pool or browsing against nearby trees. Three were missing.

As soon as Mabu had darted to rescue the youngster, the three young rebel bulls, led by the bull with one tusk, had made for the mealies!

Mabu's eyes glittered angrily as he trumpeted loudly on the night air.

The herd huddled together as he left them. Mabu could move silently when he wished. But speed was more important now than concealment. He charged through the trees towards the mealie field. Trees were shouldered aside by the mighty bulk of Mabu.

But he was too late; the three rebels had been sighted. Gongs were clanging in the village as the watchmen at the mealie field gave the alarm.

Above the sound of the gongs and the shouting, Mabu heard the crashing of the three young tuskers and their grunts and trumpeting as they stuffed their mouths with great wads of crisp, fresh mealies. Each mouthful would have kept a Zulu family for days.

Something flashed in front of Mabu and he heard the roar of a gun. It was fired by one of the watchmen. Luckily for Mabu, the watchman had forgotten in his haste to put the shot in—for it was a muzzle loader—and the wad slapped harmlessly against Mabu's flank!

Then Mabu was past the watchman, and into the field where the young beasts were milling round in a sudden panic, frightened by the sounds, the flash of the gun, and the lights that were now flickering towards them as the villagers rushed to the field.

Mabu shrilled a quick command. The three tuskers swung towards him, thankful for his leadership. For a moment Mabu paused. The man with the gun was behind. They could not go that way. The villagers were ahead. They could not go that way. On one side was the river. On the other a steep krantz, a rocky hill.

With the young tuskers behind him, Mabu swung towards the river. The watchman's gun roared again and one young tusker squealed as a heavy ball ploughed along his back. It was only a flesh wound, and a few moments later the four great beasts were pounding up the river bed to rejoin the herd.

Mabu led the herd only a little way from the waterhole. A long march lay ahead and danger would follow them. Yet the three rebels had to be taught a lesson.

The three tuskers had endangered the herd. The herd must punish them. At Mabu's trumpeted commands, the herd lined up in a long row along the river bed.

Mabu took the first of the rebels, the one with the broken tusk, by the neck, his long trunk holding the younger beast firmly. Slowly he led him down the length of the herd.

And as he passed each elephant, it raised its trunk and delivered a mighty blow. It was a lesson that would not soon be forgotten.

Dawn was near when the last of the rebels had been punished, and Mabu gave the order to march.

Meanwhile, Chief Nzolo listened with an impassive face as his men brought him news of the damage done in his mealie fields. Only when they mentioned the great size and the four tusks of the fourth elephant which had come did his face show anger.

"Mabu! The Wise One!" he gasped. He looked down at the long scar along his ribs. "We have a score to settle, Mabu and I. I was a young warrior when he did this to me. I never thought to see him again. Now I will have my revenge!"

He picked up his assegai.

"There will be a hunting to-day that will be remembered when this kraal is but a heap of dusty ashes," he vowed. "Wa! I have said it."

Yet Chief Nzolo did not rush at once to lead his men on the trail of the herd.

"Not for nothing is Mabu called the Wise One," he mused. "We must meet wisdom with wisdom, and cunning with cunning. You say the spoor of the herd showed young ones? That is good. They will not travel fast."

"We will follow the herd?" asked an eager warrior.

The Chief shook his head.

"I have a better plan!"

CHIEF NZOLO'S TRAP

IT seemed to Mabu that the herd had never moved so slowly as they did that morning. Continually he had to whip up stragglers, then trumpet to the leaders to travel faster.

Mabu was at the rear of the herd. That was the position where he expected danger to arrive.

Yet the morning wore on and the air was free of the scent of Man. The herd could not understand the need for haste. They continued to dawdle, feeding occasionally when they came across one of the rare patches of greenery. Mabu could trumpet all he wished. He could not put a sense of urgency into them.

Their course was a broad half circle. They had headed first across the veld, straight away from the danger that came from the kraal. But now they were swinging round on to their earlier course. They had to do that. There was no water on the veld, and no food. But to the north there was water and food.

It was almost noon when Mabu's fears were realised. Faintly on the wind from the south came the scent of Man. At first only he, with his huge trunk, could smell it. But soon all the herd were raising their trunks and sniffing. The pace of the herd began to increase.

Still the scent of Man grew stronger.

Now the leading tuskers were trumpeting impatiently, wondering why Mabu did not let the herd move into its mile-devouring run.

But Mabu, at the rear, was not satisfied. The scent of Man was there and Man was following them, hunting them.

This was wrong, Mabu knew. It is the nature of all hunting animals to hunt upwind, so that they can stalk their prey while the prey cannot scent them. And to Mabu, Man was the greatest of all hunting animals.

Yet Man was hunting downwind. Something was wrong. Mabu suspected a trap.

Ahead the ground was broken up into a series of jagged hills, too steep for the herd to climb. Yet beyond those hills lay water. Mabu knew of a little lake which even drought could not dry. Two ways led to the lake. There were two valleys leading out of the plain of the River Roko, and each led towards the lake. The shortest way was through a valley to the right of their present course.

Mabu began to move up through the herd to swing them round to the right and through the valley.

The scent of Man was suddenly overlaid by a new smell. The smell of smoke. This new smell quickly gained in strength. The tall, dry grass of the veld was burning behind the herd, cutting off any retreat.

A few of the younger beasts began to trumpet shrilly in fear as they smelled the smoke.

Without a command from Mabu the herd broke into a quick trot, then into a run. Mabu was content to let them go. They were heading for the second valley and it was as good a way as the first.

In a bid to escape from the great jungle fire, Mighty Mabu and his herd pounded into the valley. Suddenly Mabu trumpeted a warning. Waiting in ambush were heavily-armed Zulu hunters!

The fire would not burn on the valley floor, for it was bare and rocky.

Small clumps of trees were blotted out as the herd thundered over them. Dust rose in a cloud as thick as the smoke from the fire behind.

His ears wide, Mabu now led the herd. Even in this emergency, he picked the easiest route for the younger calves.

Within a hundred yards of the valley he halted suddenly. His trunk curled up and he roared out the loudest trumpet of his life.

For his huge ears had picked up a sound from the valley entrance. It was the chink of iron on stone.

It could mean only one thing. Man was ahead of them. Man lay in wait at the mouth of the valley. And the fire roared closer to the rear of the herd.

SAVING THE HERD

"MABU the Wise, but Chief Nzolo the wiser," muttered one warrior to another from his hiding-place behind a rock in the valley.

"Truly," said the second, "our Chief must be an Izangoma, a worker of magic. He knew the herd would swing in a wide ring and head for this place."

"Aye, and give us plenty of time to get ahead of them," said the first, patting the three foot long barrel of his muzzle loading gun.

"But the real wisdom of Chief Nzolo was in sending only the women and children to follow the herd, and fire the veld behind them. When Mabu scented them, he thought the danger lay behind. Now he comes unwitting into our trap. Oh ko! there will be many tusks for us to sell to the traders. We will get many cattle for them."

"Ula! Fool!" hissed Chief Nzolo. "You will get my assegai in your ribs if you are not silent. They come, the great ones, they come."

The rebuked warriors jerked back into cover. And as they did so the first man's gun clattered against the rock. With fury in his face, Chief Nzolo turned to him.

It was already too late.

Faint though the sound was, Mabu had heard it. He knew the sound of iron. He knew it could be made only by Man. So Man was in the valley ahead.

As Mabu halted and trumpted, the onrushing herd smashed into him. Yet his strength was such that he stemmed the tide and halted the herd. They milled round in a whimpering, squealing mob, not knowing what to do.

In his own mind Mabu was sizing up the situation. There was Man in the valley. There was the fire behind. But there was the other valley. The herd should just be able to reach it before the fire closed the way.

Yet Mabu hesitated for a second. There was danger in heading for the other valley. The fire might move faster than the herd. But there was no scent of man in this valley. So the herd could charge on through to the lake and safety.

A sheer cliff rose on one side of the valley. Before the herd knew what he was doing, Mabu had raced towards this cliff. The flat surface had the effect of turning the wind upwards, so that there was a faint breeze at the bottom of the cliff. And this breeze came from up the valley. One sniff was all Mabu needed.

Then he was thundering back towards the herd, swinging them round and heading them for the second valley. That sniff had told Mabu that many men lay ahead in the first valley.

When they found themselves being headed towards the fire, there was a near panic among the elephants. But Mabu waded into them with his trunk and shouldered them into line.

Yet he could not be everywhere at once. Two young bulls decided that the first valley was a safer course than towards the flames. They broke away suddenly and, squealing loudly, headed up the valley.

Mabu was after them like a flash. The first he caught by the tail and jerked back on his haunches on the ground. A couple of quick cuffs on the head sent him back to the herd.

But by now the second was well ahead. It was the bull with the broken tusk. Mabu started after him. It was already too late. Broken-Tusk was almost into the valley.

Woomph!

The sound of the shot echoed from the valley. At first it seemed that Broken-Tusk had been missed. He still charged on. Suddenly his front legs buckled and he slid forward. His tusk dug a deep furrow in the dry soil.

Mabu trumpeted once, and turned to lead the herd away towards the second valley and the fire.

Chief Nzolo slowly straightened his stiffened limbs, and as he looked after the vanishing herd he murmured: "Go in peace, Mabu. Truly do they call you Wise One."

The last hundred yards to the safety of the second valley were a nightmare for the fear-filled herd. But Mabu was everywhere among them, urging them on through the smoke and flames that licked towards them, guiding the young ones, lending his strength to the weak amongst the old ones.

Suddenly they were breathing fresh air and the fire was behind them again. They were in the second valley.

And a little later they were at the lake. Trunks squirted water over scorched hides, burned feet dug down into the mud of the bottom.

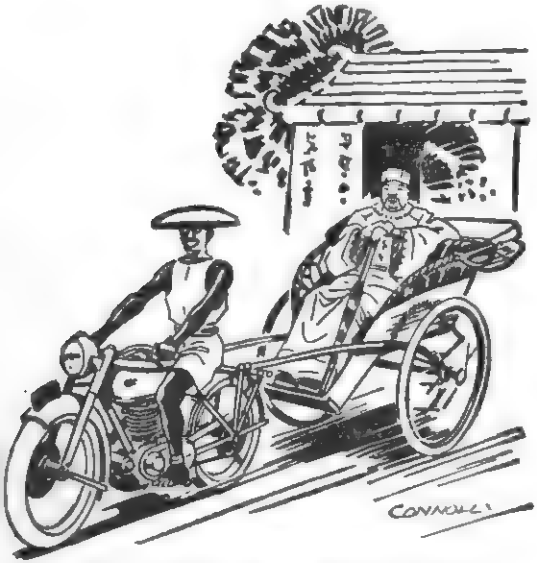
Still watchful but content, Mabu strolled along the bank. The herd was safe!

THEY'RE INVENTORS' BRAINWAVES!

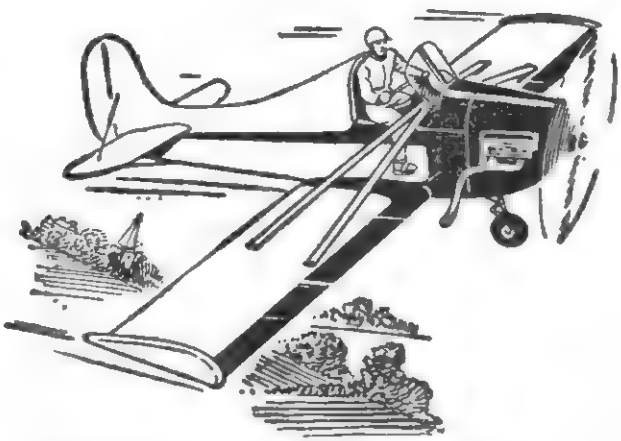
The soldier shown here isn't using a vacuum cleaner—but an electrical device for locating buried explosive mines. And on his feet he wears inflated boots. The latter distribute his weight over a bigger area than ordinary boots, and thus decrease the danger of the job.

Sneak-thieves at railway stations won't like this invention. It's a suit-case which, when taken by anyone who doesn't understand the secret control, transmits a shout of warning!

Ski-ing downhill is great fun; but climbing up again is no joke—unless your skis have been fitted with the portable motor which a winter sportsman has invented. This motor enables him to speed up a three-in-one slope at six miles an hour. When he wishes to ski downwards, he merely disconnects the drive.



For centuries man-drawn rickshaws have been used for conveying passengers in the Far East. Now, however, man-power is gradually being displaced by motor-power. Enterprising Orientals have bought motor-cycles which tow the rickshaws and do a "roaring" trade!

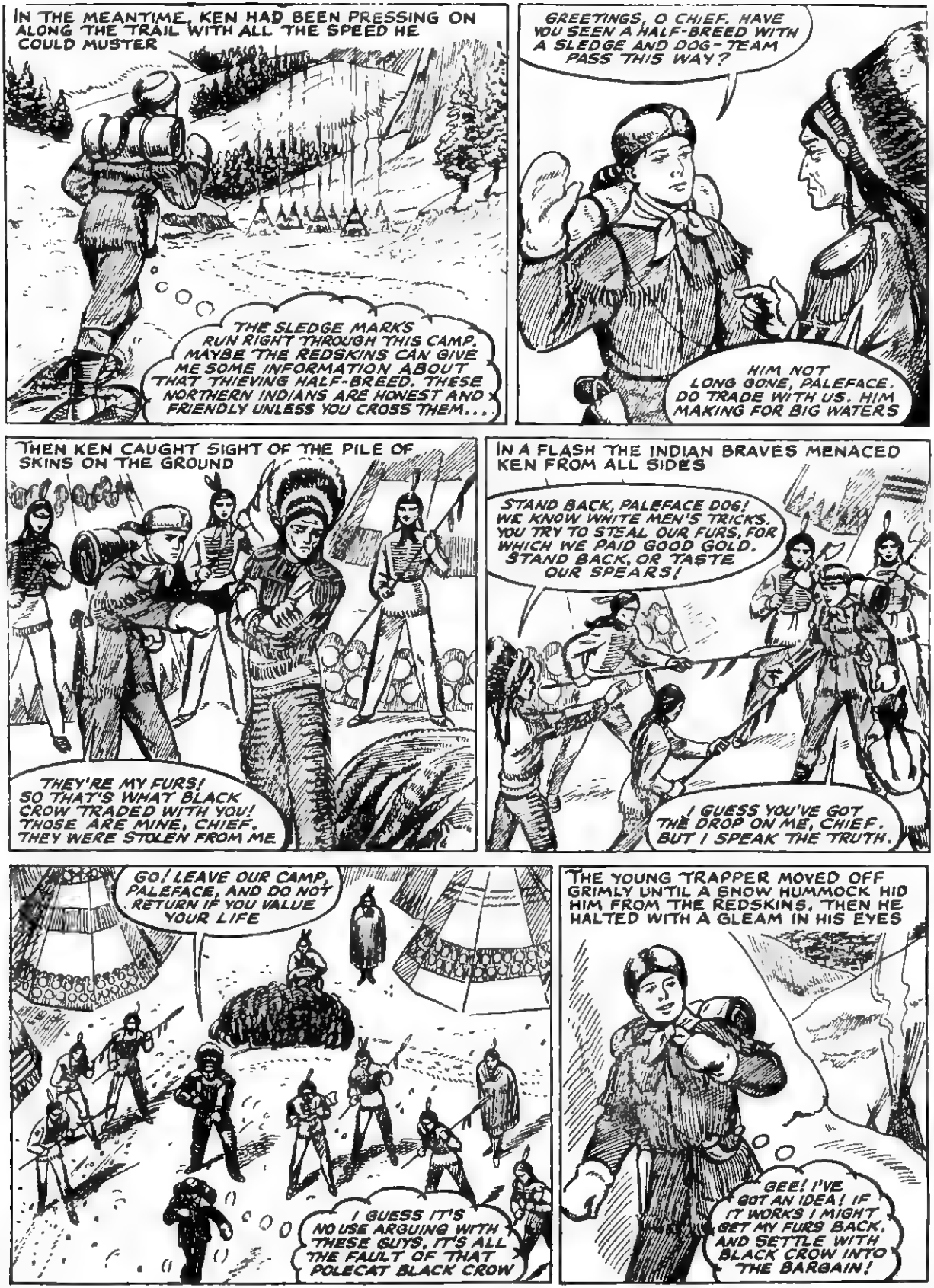


The bicycle-aeroplane has arrived! Known as a Fly-Cycle, it is steered by means of handle-bars—and there isn't even a cockpit for the pilot. It has been designed for short-range work on American farms and ranches.

TRAPPER KEN FOILS the FUR THIEF
BY DAN COLT
AFTER A BUSY SEASON IN THE FROZEN NORTH OF CANADA, KEN KEEN, A YOUNG FUR-TRAPPER, AND HIS HALF-BREED HELPER, BLACK CROW, PREPARED TO SET OFF TO THE COAST WITH A VALUABLE LOAD OF SKINS. KEN KNEW THAT THE WINTER ICE WOULD ALREADY BE MELTING AND CRACKING IN HUDSON BAY, AND THE TALL SHIPS WOULD BE GETTING READY TO RACE SOUTHWARDS WITH THE NEW SEASON'S FURS.
ZIS EES ZE LAST BALE, M'SIEU KEN
GOOD. WE'LL STRAP IT ON TOP OF THE REST AND THEN GET CRACKING. I WANT THE BEST PRICE FOR MY FURS--AND TO DO THAT WE MUST REACH PORT KARNAK BEFORE THE FIRST SHIP SAILS AT SUNSET TO-MORROW
WITH THE CARGO COMPLETE, KEN AND BLACK CROW SET FORTH ON THEIR JOURNEY.
MUSH! MUSH! AWAY YOU GO, MY HUSKIES!
ON THEY SPED ACROSS THE SNOWY WASTES, HEADING FOR THE COAST MANY MILES AWAY
KEN FELT WELL PLEASED WITH THE PROSPECTS--LITTLE KNOWING WHAT WAS RUNNING THROUGH BLACK CROW'S EVIL MIND
THIS LOAD SHOULD FETCH PLENTY, IF WE ONLY GET THERE IN TIME
THE SKINS ARE WORTH A SMALL FORTUNE... AND I MEAN THAT FORTUNE TO BE MINE. MY CHANCE WILL SOON COME
HOUR AFTER HOUR THE STURDY HUSKIES RACED ON. THEN, AS DUSK FELL, KEN PULLED TO A HALT.
WE'LL CAMP HERE TILL DAWN, BLACK CROW, THEN PRESS ON AGAIN. YOU PUT THE TENTS UP AND I'LL GET A FIRE GOING

WHEN THE TWO HAD HAD A HOT MEAL, KEN DECIDED TO TURN IN
WE'LL GET SOME SHUT-EYE NOW, BLACK CROW. WE'VE TO MAKE AN EARLY START TO-MORROW TO BE SURE OF REACHING PORT KARNAK BY SUNSET
NO NEED TO STAND GUARD. THERE'S NOT A HUMAN BEING FOR MILES, AND THERE ARE NO WOLVES AROUND THESE PARTS
OKAY, M'SIEU KEN. GOOD NIGHT
SILENCE FELL OVER THE CAMP. BUT AFTER A WHILE THE HALF-BREED STEALTHILY PULLED OPEN HIS TENT-FLAP
HE IS FAST ASLEEP. NOW EES MY CHANCE
THE TREACHEROUS HALF-BREED QUIETLY ROUSED THE HUSKIES. THEN, WITH A TRIUMPHANT LEER ON HIS LIPS, HE DROVE OFF WITH THE SLEDGE.
KEN KEEN EES A STUPID FOOL! HE WILL NEVER OVER-TAKE ME ON FOOT. I SHALL BE ABLE TO SELL ZE FURS AND MAKE A FORTUNE!
SUDDENLY THE SOUND OF A BARK... JERKED KEN FROM HIS SLEEP
THE DOG TEAM! SOMEONE'S GETTING AWAY WITH THE SLEDGE AND THE FURS. WAKE UP, BLACK CROW! QUICK, MAN!
KEN SCRAMBLED FROM HIS TENT, THEN STOOD THUNDERSTRUCK, GAZING AFTER THE VANISHING SLEDGE
WHY, IT—IT'S BLACK CROW HIMSELF! THE LOWDOWN, DOUBLE-CROSSING HALF-BREED! HE'S GOT AWAY WITH MY WHOLE CATCH!

SEETHING WITH RAGE, KEN BUCKLED ON HIS SNOW-SHOES, AND STARTED TO FOLLOW THE MARKS LEFT BY THE STOLEN SLEDGE.
I MAY NOT CATCH UP WITH HIM IN TIME TO SAVE MY FURS, BUT I'LL TRACK DOWN THAT CROOKED SKUNK IN THE END AND MAKE HIM PAY FOR HIS TREACHERY!
SOON AFTER THE SUN HAD RISEN, BLACK CROW CAME UPON AN INDIAN CAMP
MAYBE I SELL ZE FURS TO ZE REDSKINS. EET WOULD BE SAFER THAN RISKING ZE FUR-TRADER IN PORT KARNAK
BLACK CROW HALTED INSIDE THE CAMP, AND BEGAN A PARLEY WITH THE REDSKIN CHIEF, GREAT BEAR
ZESE GOOD FURS. I SELL FOR GOLD
UGH. YOU UNLOAD. WE TAKE GOOD LOOK AT THEM
BLACK CROW FRETTED IMPATIENTLY WHILE THE REDSKINS EXAMINED THE FURS ONE BY ONE
I WEESH ZESE FOOLS WOULD HURRY. KEN KEEN MAY BE CLOSE ON MY TRAIL
AT LAST CHIEF GREAT BEAR HELD OUT A BAG OF GOLD-DUST
WE OFFER THIS FOR ALL YOUR FURS
ZEY WORTH TWICE AS MUCH. BUT BLACK CROW HAS NO TIME TO ARGUE. EET'S A DEAL. I MUST GET GOING
THE CROOKED HALF-BREED SET OFF FROM THE REDSKIN CAMP WITH THE EMPTY SLEDGE
A BAG OF GOLD! NOW TO CATCH ZE SHIP AND SAIL AWAY FROM ZIS ACCURSED FROZEN COUNTRY. ZEN BLACK CROW ENJOY A LIFE OF LUXURY!


IN THE MEANTIME, KEN HAD BEEN PRESSING ON ALONG THE TRAIL WITH ALL THE SPEED HE COULD MUSTER
THE SLEDGE MARKS RUN RIGHT THROUGH THIS CAMP. MAYBE THE REDSKINS CAN GIVE ME SOME INFORMATION ABOUT THAT THIEVING HALF-BREED. THESE NORTHERN INDIANS ARE HONEST AND FRIENDLY UNLESS YOU CROSS THEM...
GREETINGS, O CHIEF. HAVE YOU SEEN A HALF-BREED WITH A SLEDGE AND DOG-TEAM PASS THIS WAY?
HIM NOT LONG GONE, PALEFACE. DO TRADE WITH US. HIM MAKING FOR BIG WATERS
THEN KEN CAUGHT SIGHT OF THE PILE OF SKINS ON THE GROUND
THEY'RE MY FURS! SO THAT'S WHAT BLACK CROW TRADED WITH YOU! THOSE ARE MINE, CHIEF. THEY WERE STOLEN FROM ME
IN A FLASH THE INDIAN BRAVES MENACED KEN FROM ALL SIDES
STAND BACK, PALEFACE DOG! WE KNOW WHITE MEN'S TRICKS. YOU TRY TO STEAL OUR FURS, FOR WHICH WE PAID GOOD GOLD. STAND BACK, OR TASTE OUR SPEARS!
I GUESS YOU'VE GOT THE DROP ON ME, CHIEF. BUT I SPEAK THE TRUTH.
GO! LEAVE OUR CAMP, PALEFACE, AND DO NOT RETURN IF YOU VALUE YOUR LIFE
I GUESS IT'S NO USE ARGUING WITH THESE GUYS. IT'S ALL THE FAULT OF THAT POLECAT BLACK CROW
THE YOUNG TRAPPER MOVED OFF GRIMLY UNTIL A SNOW HUMMOCK HID HIM FROM THE REDSKINS. THEN HE HALTED WITH A GLEAM IN HIS EYES
GEE! I'VE GOT AN IDEA! IF IT WORKS I MIGHT GET MY FURS BACK, AND SETTLE WITH BLACK CROW INTO THE BARGAIN!

UNSEEN BY THE REDSKINS, KEN TOOK THE POWDER-HORN FROM HIS BELT AND BEGAN TO TRICKLE GUNPOWDER ON TO THE GROUND
I'LL HAVE TO WORK FAST! EVEN IF I DO RECOVER THE FURS, I'VE STILL TO GET THEM TO PORT KARNAK BEFORE SUNSET
QUICKLY COMPLETING HIS TASK, KEN STRODE BACK INTO THE CAMP AND SNATCHED UP A BLAZING BRAND
IT'S THE PALEFACE AGAIN!
LISTEN TO ME - O REDMEN! I COME TO PROVE MY WORDS
I AM A WHITE MEDICINE-MAN! WITH MY MAGIC I WILL CALL UPON YOUR GREAT MANITOU TO SEND YOU A SIGN - TO TELL YOU WHO IS THE LIAR AND THIEF -- BLACK CROW OR ME!
TURNING, KEN PUT THE FLAME TO THE TRAIL OF GUNPOWDER
O GREAT MANITOU! OPEN THE EYES OF YOUR RED CHILDREN, TELL THEM THE TRUTH IN WORDS OF FIRE
AIEE! SEE WHAT APPEARS ON THE GROUND!
THE TRAIL BURNT TO ITS END, THEN A GASP OF AWED AMAZEMENT AROSE FROM THE WATCHING REDSKINS
THERE IS THE ANSWER!
IT IS A BIRD—A CROW--DRAWN IN FIRE WHICH HAS MELTED THE SNOW. IT IS THE GREAT MANITOU'S WAY OF SAYING THAT BLACK CROW IS INDEED A THIEF!
THE REDSKIN CHIEF NODDED IN AGREEMENT
WAUGH! THE PALEFACE SPEAKS THE TRUTH. WE MUST NOT ANGER THE GREAT MANITOU. GIVE THE PALEFACE HIS FURS AND LET HIM GO IN PEACE

BUT WITHOUT MY SLEDGE I CANNOT CARRY THE FURS, O CHIEF. WILL YOU LEND ME SOME BRAVES TO HELP WITH THIS LOAD? IT IS VITAL THAT I REACH PORT KARNAK BY SUNSET
BY SUNSET! ON FOOT! IT IS IMPOSSIBLE, PALEFACE. BUT I WILL LEND YOU THREE OF MY BEST BRAVES
TAKE THE SHORT CUT ACROSS THE SNOW HILLS. IT WILL SAVE MANY MILES. BUT I FEAR YOU WILL NOT REACH THE GREAT WATER BY SUNSET
I'LL DO MY DARNDEST, CHIEF. AND IF WE CATCH UP WITH THAT THIEVING SKUNK BLACK CROW, I'LL SEE THAT YOU GET YOUR GOLD BACK
WITH THREE STURDY BRAVES CARRYING HIS PRECIOUS FURS, KEN SET OFF ACROSS THE HIGH SNOW HILLS, HEADING FOR THE DISTANT PORT
WE NOT REACH PORT KARNAK IN TIME, WHITE MAN
WE'LL HAVE A DERN GOOD TRY. STEP IT OUT, BOYS.
KEN AND HIS LITTLE PARTY PRESSED ON FOR MILE AFTER MILE. BUT SOON THEY BEGAN TO TIRE, AND THEIR SNOW-SHOES SANK IN THE SOFT, DEEP DRIFTS, MAKING EVERY FOOTSTEP AN EFFORT
SUDDENLY ONE OF THE BRAVES CRIED OUT EXCITEDLY AND POINTED DOWN INTO THE VALLEY
SEE! FAR BELOW! THAT IS MAN WHO TOOK OUR GOLD. HAWKEYE MAKES NO MISTAKE
BY THUNDER, YOU'RE RIGHT, HAWKEYE! IT'S BLACK CROW. IF WE COULD ONLY GET THAT SLEDGE AND TEAM BACK, I'D STAND A GOOD CHANCE OF MAKING PORT KARNAK IN TIME — BUT I GUESS WE'LL NEVER STOP HIM NOW
THEN KEN HAD A BRAIN-WAVE -- AND HIS JAW JUTTED WITH DETERMINATION
MAYBE I CAN STOP THAT SKUNK AFTER ALL. BUT IT'S A BIG GAMBLE. I'VE GOT TO RISK EVERYTHING!

KEN SWUNG ROUND TO HIS INDIAN HELPERS
QUICK! ROPE YOUR LOADS TOGETHER INTO ONE BIG BUNDLE. HURRY, MEN!
SO BE IT, PALEFACE
THE FURS WERE LASHED TOGETHER WITH RAW-HIDE
THAT'S THE IDEA! NOW HURL IT OVER THE EDGE!
WAUGH! PALEFACE MUST BE CRAZY
THE BUNDLE WAS FLUNG DOWN THE CLIFF-FACE
IF THIS DOESN'T COME OFF, THEN I'M SUNK
ROLLING OVER AND OVER, THE BUNDLE RUMBLED DOWNWARDS, GATHERING SNOW AS IT FELL
IT'S WORKED, BY HOKEY! WE'VE STARTED AN AVALANCHE— JUST AS I HOPED!
ON THE TRAIL BELOW, THE HALF-BREED LOOKED UP WITH A GASP OF TERROR
MA FOI! AN AVALANCHE! EET IS COMING STRAIGHT FOR ME!
THE NEXT MOMENT BLACK CROW WAS SMASHED TO THE GROUND BY THE ROARING MASS OF SNOW
AAAGH! A THOUSAND DEMONS! HELP!

KEN AND HIS BRAVES RACED DOWN THE STEEP SLOPE
WE'VE GOT HIM! COME ON, YOU GUYS
NOW TO SETTLE WITH THE DOG WHO TRICKED US OUT OF OUR GOLD
SO EET WAS YOU WHO STARTED ZE AVALANCHE. I KEEL YOU FOR ZAT!
NO, YOU DON'T, BLACK CROW. UP WITH YOUR HANDS, YOU TREACHEROUS JACKAL
AS THE HALF-BREED STAGGERED TO HIS FEET, THE REDSKINS RAISED THEIR TOMAHAWKS
SLAY THE TREACHEROUS DOG!
NO! HE SHALL NOT DIE. I HAVE WORK FOR HIM TO DO BEFORE I HAND HIM OVER TO THE MOUNTIES
KEN TOOK THE BAG OF GOLD-DUST FROM THE SNARLING HALF-BREED AND GAVE IT TO THE REDSKINS
RETURN THIS TO YOUR CHIEF, BOYS. I'VE GOT TO MOVE FAST IF I'M TO REACH THE BIG WATERS IN TIME - AND I'M GOING TO MAKE MIGHTY GOOD USE OF THIS SKUNK!
AND AN HOUR BEFORE SUNSET, KEN'S LOADED SLEDGE SWEPT TRIUMPHANTLY DOWN INTO PORT KARNAK, WITH THE STRANGEST TEAM-LEADER THE NORTH HAD EVER SEEN
WE'VE DONE IT, BY HOKEY! THE SHIP IS STILL HERE, AND I CAN GET TOP PRICE FOR MY FURS. KEEP PULLING, BLACK CROW, AND HEAD FOR THE QUAYSIDE. MUSH! MUSH! MUSH!
THE END

SKINNY'S Smoke-BOMB

By Tom Stirling

BAMBOOZLED BY A BULLY

ABOUT the worst thing that can happen to a chap, I reckon, is to be given a nickname he doesn't like. I didn't choose to be called Skinny, believe me. I may be slim, but I'm not skinny. However, the name was given me the very day I arrived at Rockcliff, and it has stuck. It seems odd, but that first day at school was yesterday!

Being a new boy, I didn't stick my neck out, but kept to myself when the whole train-load of us disgorged at the little station near the school. There was a mob of chaps on the platform, and I didn't know any of them. Then suddenly some burly type of about sixteen or so, carrying a heavy bag, turned to a group of us new boys, and said, "Hey, Skinny!"

He looked straight at me.

"Who's Skinny?" I asked.

"You are," said the red-haired, freckled-faced chap behind me. "Isn't he, chaps?"

Of course, a new boy can't allow that kind of thing to pass.

"Anyone calling me Skinny," I said, "will get a smart bash on the nose."

"SKINNY!" said about twenty boys together.

"O.K. Form a queue," I said. "And I'll dot you all on the nose in fair order, and no favouritism."

I don't know quite what happened next, but at least half a dozen chaps must have taken hold of me, and next minute I was spreadeagled—the dusty platform half an inch in front of my nose. Then they dragged me by the feet along the platform.

Gosh . . . I was panting and gasping—and gee! was I scruffy! I was coated with dust and discarded rail tickets.

Then, as I dusted myself down, up came the lout who had called out "Skinny" first.

"Take my bag, Skinny," he said, "and put it in the coach waiting in the yard."

I grabbed the suitcase, supposing he was a prefect, and went with it to the coach outside, and put it on the luggage rack at the back!

When we reached the school, which is set in the midst of the countryside, the bullying rotter made me carry his suitcase, as well as my own luggage.

A master showed me into a study in West House,

He was Only a New Boy—but He Soon Put the School Bully in His Place!

which I was to share with a likable, jolly chap named Saunders, known to his pals as "Sawney." When the tea bell went I was in such a hurry—I was starving—that I dashed out of the study and ran slap into the prefect who had made me cart his suitcase for him!

He hollered at me, then gave me fifty lines to write before breakfast next morning. I had so much to do—unpacking, etc.—that I had no time to do the lines that evening. And so, bright and early the next morning, I leapt out of my bed in the dormitory containing about nineteen other lads, dressed, washed, and hared to my study.

I was busy scribbling the lines, when Sawney sauntered in. He's a lazy type, but he's got a good heart. He looked in concern at me—and the lines.

"So you've fallen foul of a prefect already?" he asked. "Which one was it?"

I described the chap who'd given me the lines—and to my surprise Sawney burst out laughing.

"That chap's no prefect, you clot," he hooted. "He's only a Fifth-Former. His name's Thugden. Always chucking his weight about, and trying to fool new kids into thinking he's a prefect. You can throw those lines into the wastepaper basket."

I was hopping mad at hearing the news.

"Sawney," I gritted, "Keep this to yourself. I'm going to get even with that rotter Thugden. He sounds the type who needs to be put in his place."

"Take it easy, Skinny," Sawney warned. "He's tough. Most chaps steer clear of him."

I didn't say anything more, but at least he did promise to keep quiet about Thugden's having fooled me, especially after I pointed out that as he shared a study with me it would be as much a disgrace for him as for me.

However, I didn't think up a way of getting even with Thugden very quickly—not until I ran across him in the quadrangle just before lessons.

"Ha! Skinny," Thugden gloated. "Those lines! Fifty of them—or a whacking. Take them to my study."

That gave me a brilliant idea.

"Where is your study?" I asked.

"No. 3 in East House. But I'm moving from there, so I want you to take all the books from the shelves and pile them up on the table ready. Understood?"

"Understood," I said.

And I pretended to be meek so's not to spoil my little plot. I could see a queer grin on the rotter's face, and I daresay he took me for an awful fathead. But this was where I showed him how fat his own head was!

When Thugden saw his study, after I'd had a go at it, he would have the shock of his life! If he thought I was going to do his moving chores, he had a second think due to him.

I meant to see that Thugden's wouldn't be tidy—and in fact, so untidy that tidying it would take a few hours. I spent some time thinking out how to do it, and rather missed what the Latin master was talking about, which seemed to annoy him.

I don't know why it is, but these masters who teach Latin seem to get sourer than most. Of course, it must be a pretty dreary business teaching a dead language; it puzzles me why they don't bury it.

Luckily I didn't waste all my time listening to the master—I worked out the revenge scheme pretty fully. Smoke! That was what I needed to foul up Thugden's study. I could remember a time at home when I had turned the wick up of an oil stove and the whole place had been covered with soot. It took ages to get it clean!

THE BOMB THAT DIDN'T GO OFF!

I HADN'T an oil lamp, but I reckoned there might be some way of working up a decent kind of smoke screen, so I put it to Sawney.

"You said there was a brainy type in the form," I reminded him. "A scientist chap. They can usually fake smoke."

"Jolly good idea," agreed Sawney. "I know just the chap you want. He's probably in the lab, so I'll take you over there."

The science laboratory is a pretty smart, modern place with all manner of instruments, gadgets, sinks, rows of bottles and so on. Sure enough, we found the chap Sawney had spoken of. Wiggins, his name was, a thoughtful chap with large and rather thick glasses, untidy hair, and acid spots on his clothes.

Sawney introduced us, and I explained my plan to get revenge on Thugden.

"A smoke bomb is the very thing for you," said Wiggins, warmly. "I've made several of them. And controlled by a timing apparatus, too, so that the bomb goes off at a certain time. Whoof! A great bank of home-made cloud is formed!"

Just what I wanted. I thanked him, and agreed to pay him five shillings for the smoke bomb. Cheap at double the price. I wanted to teach Thugden a lesson, and save my good name. Sooner or later it would get around that Thugden pulled my leg with the lines; and, of course, a whole lot of chaps already knew that I carried his case. But when they hear about the smoke bomb . . .

It's jolly interesting meeting people like Wiggins, because I'm pretty sure he's the type that one day will invent a rocket to the moon, or a new kind of three-dimensional television screen, or something just as clever.

After a hard-working day, with bags of lessons, I looked forward to bombing Thugden. I really was mad keen when just after tea I went into the lab and found Wiggins had finished the bomb.

"Had most of the parts by me," he said with a smile. "It just can't fail. I've set the time—7 o'clock. At that time you'll have enough smoke to black out Blackpool."

Then just as I was going, after paying the five bob, he called to me.

"Just one thing," he said anxiously. "Don't tell anyone I made it. I'm a modest chap."

I promised I wouldn't, of course; then I slipped away. I went to Study 3, East House, and had to loiter a bit because someone had just gone in there.

Out he came, and so I sneaked in.

The room was tidy; the books were still on the shelves—and so far as I was concerned, they could jolly well stay there.

Making sure no one was around, I pushed the smoke bomb under the bed. (Some seniors live in their studies, you see).

"Tick, Tock, Tick, Tock," it was going—and on the umpteenth "tock," in about an hour's time, up it would go.

But the bomb didn't go off! Not a puff of smoke! Nothing!

I went past Study 3 at seven, and again just before bedtime.

"That chap Wiggins is an ass," I told Sawney fiercely, as we went to bed.

"How would you know, Skinny?" asked Sawney, grinning.

"It didn't go off," I said darkly. "And I paid five bob for it."

"Perhaps the bomb will go off in the night. Ten to one it will," said Sawney. "Much better fun, too, if Thugden's in bed, you know. Anyway, Wiggins is in our dorm . . . at the end. Go and ask him."

Rushing past the other chaps, I reached our pet scientist.

Wiggins was fitting his patent alarm, which pulls off his bed-clothes at rising time—or so he says.

"Hope it works better than the alarm on the you-know-what," I said. "It didn't go off."

"Ah. A.M., my dear chap—not P.M. That's the answer," he said with a superior smile. "It'll go off first thing in the morning, have no fear!"

I went back to Sawney, slightly consoled.

"If it does go off, Skinny, we'll know all about it—the smoke will drift up here," he said.

"Up here? How can it, Sawney?" I asked. "East House is a quarter of a mile away."

"EAST HOUSE!" yelped Sawney, goggling. "Thugden is in this house—West!"

"But he told me he lived in East House," I protested.

Sawney flopped down on his bed, and went quite pale. I knew by his glassy-eyed look that something was badly wrong; and I soon learned what.

His knees knocking, Skinny crouched under the bed. If the angry-faced prefect caught him with the smoke-bomb, then he'd be on the receiving end of the prefect's cane!

"S-Study 3, Easts," he gasped. "Why you raving looney, that's Bostock's study! He's the toughest, most merciless prefect in the school. He'll report it to our Housemaster. Gosh! This is the end. You're finished!"

I saw how I had been fooled. Thugden had sent me to that study, not because he was moving from it, but just to get me to empty Bostock's shelves, and pile up his furniture—and perhaps be caught doing it.

In pretty dismal mood I went to bed. The lights went out, but, of course, I couldn't sleep. If that smoke bomb did its stuff, and blacked out Bostock, I should certainly be for it in a very big way!

Gradually the muttering in the dorm ceased, and then, silence. The chaps were asleep. Even Sawney was alseep, until I leaned over and prodded him.

" It'll all come out," I said, artfully. " I don't blame you for introducing me to Wiggins and his bomb—I hope the Head won't. But anyway, you hadn't actually any part in it—much. I'll plead with the Head to let you off with a flogging."

Old Sawney almost leapt out of bed.

" Listen," he muttered huskily. " You get that bomb back. If there's an enquiry, I might be mentioned."

" You might, so why not come and help me get it back? " I asked.

" You're crazy," he snorted. " How can we get it back? "

Then I told him a plan I had. After a lot of grunting, he agreed. Grumbling all the time, he came with me. We dressed, and crept from the dorm, and downstairs; then we got out by a side window and made for East House. Although it was past " lights out " time, the main door was ajar; for the Housemaster, as Sawney told me, plays bridge with the Head until a late hour, and secretly leaves the door unfastened—or he thinks it's secret!

While I crept along the corridor, and hid behind some coats, Sawney went into the garden of the house, and threw a stone at Bostock's window. Bostock presently got up, and I saw him with a stick in his hand, wrapping a dressing gown about him, hurry from the house.

He was no sooner gone than I nipped into his room. But I was actually on all fours when I heard him coming back. There was only one thing to do—get under the bed with the bomb.

Bostock went out again, but came back without giving me a chance to escape—and under that bed I had to stay, hardly breathing, until I judged he was asleep.

I crawled out, and crept from his study.

Naturally there was no sign of Sawney, but I got back to West House all right with the bomb. The bomb, I should explain, is a simple tin affair with a clock face on the front—the face of an old alarm clock. There's a spout from the tin, and out through that, the smoke pours.

Now the bright idea that came to me was that if I put it on a tray with a teapot next to it, it would look like one of those elaborate devices that sound an alarm and pour out morning tea!

Within ten minutes, after routing about in the deserted kitchen at West House by torchlight, I found a teapot and some tea to put in it. There was a small tray in the corner, and the set-up was complete.

Having found out from Sawney which really was Thugden's study, I bumped against the door and made a chuckling sound.

A few minutes passed, the bed creaked, then the door opened softly, and a torch shone on me as I knelt on the floor by the tray.

" Ha! Skinny! " said Thugden in mocking tone. " What goes on? "

" Please don't say you've seen me," I begged him meekly.

" Uhu—huh! And why not? " he scoffed.

" I have here an early morning tea alarm," I said. " It—it's not really allowed."

He shone his torch on the tray and whistled softly.

" You fags do yourselves proud, eh? Automatic tea alarm—and very nice, too. I shall not report this to the housemaster if you take it into my study now, and leave it there."

Gosh! Just what I had planned. Luck was with me for once!

I put it at his bedside. I told him that the " kettle "—which was really the smoke bomb—was set for seven o'clock.

Pretending to be fed up about his taking it, I left him.

At seven o'clock, Sawney and I were awake in the dorm and listening hard. Right on the dot we heard Thugden's yell, Then, opening a window, we saw smoke billowing from his study.

In a few words we explained the rag, and the delighted chaps grabbed jugs of water, and went charging downstairs.

Smoke was coming in clouds from Thugden's study, and he suddenly appeared in the doorway—his face black, his eyes goggling.

" O.K. We'll save you " I yelled. " Water, chaps! "

I threw a jug of icy water over him, and Sawney threw another. As two more jugfuls went hurtling in, the Housemaster galloped on to the scene.

" Is the house on fire? " he cried.

" No fire, sir," I called. " We acted in time! "

But the master charged into Thugden's room.

" No smoke without fire. Where's the fire? " he demanded.

Thugden coughed and spluttered, and squelched.

" Nun—no fire, sir . . . it was an alarm clock went wrong."

I knew that Thugden wouldn't dare admit that he'd been japed by me!

The master backed away, almost choking.

Sawney, shortling with mirth, hugged me.

" Chaps," he yelled when we were back in the dorm. " Three cheers for Skinny! It was all his own idea. This was his revenge for Thuggie's old trick of giving new boys lines. Skinny's one of the best. Give him a great big cheer. Hip, Hip, Hip—"

" HOORAY! "

And I must admit, that cheer was music to my ears!

The MAN who WRECKED a REVOLUTION

By R. G. Thomas

Stormy Tate, the Famous Skipper, in a Thrilling South American Adventure

KIDNAPPED BY BANDITS

"TINY and Jock won't think much of me as a hunter. And I'd better not tell them that I've come within inches of breaking my neck."

Stormy Tate, skipper of the ancient South Seas tramp-steamer "Wheezy Anna," muttered the words ruefully. As usual he was clad in singlet and sail-cloth shorts, and his battered naval cap was perched at a rakish angle over one eye.

But Stormy wasn't striding the deck of the "Wheezy Anna." Instead he was walking along a trail high in the mountains of the small South American republic of Quaglia.

The "Wheezy Anna" had landed a cargo at Quaglia's chief port and had then been laid up for repairs. Stormy and his two pals—Tiny White, the fattest cook in the South Seas and Jock McKay, the red-headed Scots engineer—had decided to take a holiday ashore. For three days now they had been following a little-known mountain trail.

When they had pitched camp on this particular evening, Stormy had taken his rifle and set out to shoot something for the supper pot. He had sighted a small wild pig, and in following it up he had forced his way through a line of bushes.

To his horror he had found himself on the edge of a ravine. Only by grasping a bush had he prevented himself from going over. The pig had got away and now Stormy was returning to the camp, empty-handed.

"Tiny will have to open up another couple of cans of food," he grinned. "However, I'll make up for it to-morrow and—"

He broke off as he rounded a corner of the narrow trail. Ahead of him was the camp site—but there was no sign of his two shipmates. Stormy saw instantly that something was wrong.

The camp fire had been scattered. An empty haversack, which had been ripped open, was across a small rock. Lying about were Tiny White's cherished cooking utensils.

"What the heck's happened here?" Stormy gasped.

He ran forward and clambered to the top of a high rock. From there he would have a good view of the trail.

As he stood on the boulder he glimpsed a group of a dozen horsemen disappearing along the trail. All were wearing the wide sombreros and colourful cloaks which were part of Quaglia's national dress.

In the centre of the group were three donkeys—and seated on two of them were Tiny and Jock. Their hands were bound behind their backs!

"Bandits!" Stormy rapped, and his eyes narrowed. "They've asked for trouble by kidnapping Tiny and Jock. Now they're going to get it!"

Scrambling down from the boulder, he set off along the trail with a loping run which he could keep up for hours.

The riders, however, had a long start. The sun began to sink and still Stormy hadn't seen them again. Suddenly he saw a strange glow ahead. A moment later he rounded a corner, then pulled up in amazement.

He was faced by a small village. It consisted of a cluster of adobe huts, built round one massive stone building. Surrounding the village were many blazing camp fires. By their light Stormy was able to pick out his two pals, Tiny and Jock, being escorted into the narrow village street.

"An army must be camped here!" Stormy gasped. "But why the heck did they take Tiny and Jock prisoner? Whatever the reason, I've got to rescue my pals."

He crept forward with extreme care now, for his white shorts and singlet made him conspicuous among the distinctive clothes of the rebels. He reached the camp fires and lay hidden for a moment. Then he started to crawl across the ground between the camp fires. At last he reached a dark alley-way.

Keeping close to the wall, Stormy moved silently until he could see his two pals being led into a small village square. After a short wait they were taken into a tall, dark building.

"What now?" Stormy asked himself.

Looking up, he saw a long balcony running along one side of the house. Patrolling this was a sentry, and Stormy saw him pass a large, open window and then lean over the rail at the far end.

"There must be something important behind that window," Stormy told himself, "otherwise there wouldn't be a sentry on guard."

He crept towards the window, determined to see what was inside. He had only a narrow space to cross to reach the building. The balcony cast a deep shadow and Stormy had little fear of being seen as he grasped a large drain-pipe and started to climb it. When he reached the balcony, he peered over and saw the sentry still standing at the far end.

Two minutes later the sentry straightened up and then started back along the balcony. Before he could reach the end an arm like steel encircled his neck. It was Stormy's arm!

A moment later the man was unconscious.

When Stormy got to his feet he was wearing the sentry's sombrero and cloak; the sentry lay on the floor, trussed like a chicken with strips torn from Stormy's clothing.

Slowly Stormy paced the balcony by the open window, pretending to be the sentry. Making sure he wasn't observed, he knelt by the open window.

Seated behind a desk in a room was a man dressed in a gaudy uniform.

As Stormy watched, another man entered the room and bowed low before the desk.

"Greetings to Don Miguel Romez, the new President of Quaglia," he smirked.

The man behind the desk looked up and Stormy gasped with amazement.

"Don Miguel Romez!" he murmured. "Well, if this doesn't beat everything."

Stormy had recognised the man who called himself the new President of Quaglia as a crook who had spent a lifetime in and out of South Sea jails!

THE LEAP OF A LIFETIME

"WELL, Diablo?" Miguel Romez demanded.

The man named Diablo bowed again.

"Two foreigners have just been brought into the village," he explained. "They were found camping on the trail by a scouting party. They were seized in case they might be spies. Do you wish to see them?"

Miguel Romez frowned for a moment, then shook his head.

"They can't mean any danger to us," he stated. "But it's a good thing they've been brought in. Put them in the jail. They can stay there till they rot, for all I care!"

Stormy compressed his lips, as he heard the reason for Tiny and Jock's kidnapping.

The other man was about to turn away when Romez stopped him.

"Just a moment," he rapped. "Do our men understand their orders?"

"They know that we ride out of the village within the hour," the visitor sneered.

Romez gave an evil grin.

"And that is all they will know. They think that I am leading them in revolt against the President of Quaglia. They do not suspect that I am merely using them to allow us to pull off the biggest robbery this country has ever seen. Tonight the President rides to his new capital town of Taza. He is personally escorting the nation's most valuable treasures. When his convoy reaches Death Valley, our men will attack it and put the President and his few soldiers to flight. Then you, Diablo, myself,

and a few trusted men will make off with the treasure.

Stormy, eavesdropping at the window, had heard enough. He pulled the cloak up over his face and walked to the edge of the balcony. It was up to him to rescue his two friends as quickly as he could. Once that had been accomplished, he must set out to warn Quaglia's popular President of Romez's evil scheme.

Stormy was still on the balcony when Tiny and Jock were marched away from the house. They were taken across the square to one of the largest adobe huts.

"So that's the lock-up," Stormy said to himself.

He saw the escort walk out of the hut. One remained outside on guard. He immediately sat down with his back against the door.

"Good enough," Stormy muttered. "This is where I see some action."

Knowing he looked no different from any of the figures lounging round the many camp fires, he went directly to the big hut in which Tiny and Jock were being held prisoner.

"I want a word with you," he snapped at the lounging guard.

The man jerked to his feet.

"Who are you to order me?" he howled. "I will—"

He stopped short. Part of Stormy's white shorts were showing!

Stormy realised in a flash that he'd been detected!

Before the guard could act, Stormy brought up his fist. It took the surprised man on the jaw. He collapsed, k.o.'d.

Stormy quickly searched the limp guard and took a heavy iron key from his belt. With this he opened the door of his pals' cell. Stepping inside, he came face to face with Tiny and Jock.

"Stormy!" Jock McKay whooped. "I didna think it would take ye long to turn up."

"Gosh, how'd you do it, Stormy?" Tiny gasped.

"No time to explain," Stormy rapped. "We've got to get moving. There's an all-night ride ahead of us. Wait here."

Cautiously he walked across the square to a line of tethered horses. Stormy quickly untied three of these and led them back to the jail.

"Out you come, pals," he ordered. "I've got a horse for each of us, and—"

Suddenly the sharp crack of a revolver broke the stillness of the night!

A split second after the sound of the shot a bullet snatched Stormy's sombrero from his head!

"We've been spotted!" Stormy gasped. "Come on, quick!"

As he leapt astride a horse he saw Miguel Romez standing on the balcony waving a gun. Evidently he had discovered the bound and gagged sentry there.

"Stop that man!" he shouted. "He's Stormy Tate. He will ruin our cause."

There was a confused shouting all over the village as the peons strove to surround the trio. The pals, however, were on their horses and racing into the surrounding dark country.

"We daren't keep to the trail," Stormy gasped. "There are too many rebels camped along it. We must circle round and try to reach it later."

He knew he was taking a grave risk in riding over unknown country in the dark. But it was their only hope of escape. Already they could hear thudding hoof-beats behind them as the blood-thirsty rebels began to give chase.

For mile after mile Stormy and Co. urged their steeds across the rugged terrain. But they could not shake off their relentless pursuers.

"We're keeping our lead, and that's about all," Stormy shouted. "We'll have to do better than this!"

Without any warning all three horses became almost unmanageable. One minute they were running well, the next—kicking and bucking!

Stormy remembered where they were. He strained his eyes and suddenly gave a shout.

"We're right on top of a ravine. I almost went over it earlier to-day. The horses realised the danger before we did."

Tiny, the farthest away from Stormy, did not hear the shout. His horse stood on its hind legs and threw him to the ground.

With a wide ravine ahead of them, and Romez's troops behind, it seemed that the three pals were trapped.

And Stormy knew that Miguel Romez was rogue enough to kill them on the spot!

Both Stormy and Jock leapt from their saddles, fearing Tiny had hurt himself. Immediately all three horses whirled and galloped back the way they had come.

Tiny staggered to his feet.

"I'm all right," he gasped.

"This way—hurry," Stormy rapped.

Then Stormy raced along the edge of the ravine.

Suddenly horsemen loomed up all round them. They were surrounded—cut off!

A great yell went up from the revolutionaries as the trio were sighted. Next moment the three deliberately jumped into the ravine!

It was Miguel Romez himself who first reached the edge. He peered down into the ravine and then shrugged.

"A fitting end to the three Britishers," he chuckled. "We didn't have to waste any bullets on them. They chose to commit suicide instead."

Confident that they had seen the end of the trio,

the rebels then headed back to the village.

As the sound of their horses' hoofs died away, three figures stirred on a wide grassy ledge about twenty feet down the cliff.

"Gosh!" Tiny White croaked. "I've never been so scared in my life. I thought you had gone crazy when you told us to jump, Stormy."

"We have to thank a wild pig for our escape," Stormy told them. "I nearly went into the ravine this morning when I was chasing one. I saw this wide ledge then, but I didn't think that we would have to use it."

By taking the risk of leaping to the ledge, they had saved themselves from the vengeance of ruthless Miguel Romez.

"What now?" Jock McKay asked when they had climbed out of the ravine.

"First—back to the village to get some more horses. Second—ride like heck to Death Valley and warn the President's party of Miguel Romez's plan to ambush them and steal the treasure they're taking to Taza."

As always, Tiny and Jock took their orders from Stormy without a murmur. Together they started back to the village, but long before they reached it they heard the sound of horses riding away into the distance.

"You know what that means," Stormy gritted. "Romez and his rebels are leaving for Death Valley. We've got to move fast. We need horses."

The shipmates broke into a fast run and, topping a rise in the trail, came in sight of the village. Not a rebel remained behind there.

Stormy headed for the stables. Groans of disappointment came from Tiny and Jock as they saw that the stalls were empty.

"No horses—no chance to warn Quaglia's President about Romez's ambush," Tiny shrugged dismally.

But Stormy wasn't beaten. He pointed to a small corral nearby. In it were three donkeys.

"There's our transport. Those donkeys may be small, but they're just as fast as horses in this rugged territory. And we're in luck, too. They're already saddled-up and ready to hit the trail."

A minute later and Stormy and Co. were astride the stocky little donkeys, and in hot pursuit of Romez and his rebels.

Within an hour they were a mere two miles from Death Valley—yet they had seen no sign of the revolutionaries. Stormy called a halt, and looked up at the tall cliff which towered on one side of the trail.

"I should be able to see Death Valley from the cliff-top," he announced grimly. "I'm climbing up there."

Both Tiny and Jock eyed the almost vertical face of the cliff, and turned to the daring skipper with horrified protests.

"You can't do it, Stormy. It's too steep!" cried Tiny.

"Ye'll kill yesel', mon," snapped Jock. "Dinna do it. We'll be up wi' Miguel Romez and his ruffians ony minute."

But Stormy was already beginning the perilous climb!

ROUTING THE REBELS

FLAT against the cliff face, using the smallest cracks for holds for his feet and hands, he slowly made his way up.

Their faces tense, Jock and Tiny watched his progress.

Stormy and his shipmates appeared to be trapped. Behind them were the fast approaching bandits and ahead was a deep ravine. Suddenly Stormy, followed by Jock and Tiny, leapt deliberately into the mighty chasm!

" Surely he's wasting time," grumbled Tiny.

" Dinna worry, Tiny," Jock consoled him. " It's my bet that Stormy's got some verra special reason for climbing the cliff—something a darn sight more clever than just spying out the land."

After a hectic climb, during which he sometimes found himself dangling by raw fingertips, Stormy gained the cliff-top. He spent several busy minutes there before undertaking the difficult descent.

At last he was back with his two pals again.

" I had a clear view of Death Valley," Stormy breathlessly announced. " Romez's gang are already in ambush at one end. The President and his men are just riding in at the other."

Eagerly the Wheezy Anna's skipper slid into the saddle of his waiting donkey.

" Follow me, me hearties! " he whooped, as his mount set off at a smart canter. " And don't spare the donkeys! There's work for us to do."

Tiny and Jock had to drive their steeds to the limit to keep up with their skipper. Suddenly Stormy reined his mount in—on the very edge of Death Valley!

" Look! " he exclaimed.

At the far end of the valley was a troop of the President's cavalry. Behind them rumbled a heavy tarpaulin-covered wagon. It was the wagon-load of treasure.

The soldiers were scarcely inside the valley when the officer in charge raised his revolver and fired. Next moment the whole troop had turned about and was beating it back the way it had come. The treasure wagon was left unattended!

Immediately the rebels rode from ambush and opened fire on the retreating soldiers.

" Gosh! " gasped Tiny. " The President's men ran without even attempting to fight."

At full cry the jubilant rebels pounded in pursuit of the fleeing cavalry.

But three rebels halted at the wagon. They were Miguel Romez and two of his lieutenants. Leaping from their horses, they climbed aboard the wagon and drove it towards the opposite end of the valley.

" Quick me hearties! " Stormy cried to his pals. " Ride to the end of the valley. We'll cut the swabs off."

When the treasure wagon rumbled out of the valley, three figures were poised on the valley edge about fifteen feet up. They were—Stormy, Jock and Tiny!

" Now! " roared Stormy.

As one man they launched themselves from the valley edge—on to the three treasure thieves!

" Leave Romez to me," Stormy shouted.

The gang-leader spun round from the driving seat and reached for his gun. But Stormy grabbed him by the wrist and together they pitched from the wagon. A moment later four more figures hit the ground. Tiny and Jock were each at grips with one of Romez's lieutenants.

The three separate battles finished almost at the same second. Stormy, Tiny and Jock got to their feet, brushed the dust from their clothes and eyed with satisfaction the three unconscious treasure thieves!

" We've saved the treasure," Stormy grinned.

" Only because the President's escort was so cowardly," Tiny stated. " If only they had put up any fight at all—"

" They weren't frightened," Stormy cut in. " They acted just as I planned."

" You arranged it? " Jock gasped in amazement. " But, mon, ye were miles away."

" I still arranged it," Stormy insisted, laughing. " I'll tell you how later."

They took the wagon and their prisoners back into Death Valley. As they entered, the President's cavalry entered at the other end. And the soldiers were herding along the whole of Romez's rebel army.

To their astonishment Jock and Tiny were soon shaking hands with the President.

" Quaglia will always be in your debt," the President said. " But for your timely warning our treasure would be in the hands of that rogue Romez."

Tiny looked at Stormy.

" But how did you warn the soldiers? " he asked. " I'm baffled."

Stormy grinned, and then produced a small pocket mirror.

" I didn't climb that cliff for fun," he explained then. " As a seaman I'm used to flashing messages by lamp. Well, from the top of the cliff I not only saw Death Valley, but I saw the trail far beyond it with the President's escort riding along, so I used this mirror to flash them a message. Somebody among the escort acknowledged my signal, and then I spelt out Romez's whole plot and gave them a plan of action."

He chuckled.

" When the cavalrymen bolted," he said, " they led the whole of Romez's rebels into another valley and into an ambush. As you can see, they didn't have much trouble in rounding the rebels up."

When the rebels learned about their leader's plot to keep the treasure, it was all the soldiers could do to keep them under control!

Later that afternoon Stormy, Tiny and Jock were once again trekking through the mountains. They were determined to get all the fun they could out of their holiday ashore. But before parting from the President, they gave him a promise that on their return to the coast they would call at his palace in the new town of Taza—and be his guest at a great festival held in their honour!

TONY the CIRCUS ACROBAT

by E·GEORGE COWAN

THE VILLAGE GREEN AT BLACKFEN WAS A SCENE OF GREAT ACTIVITY, FOR ON THE FOLLOWING DAY ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR FAIRS OF THE MIDDLE AGES WAS DUE TO OPEN. AMONG THE CIRCUS PERFORMERS WERE TONY FAIRMAN, AN ACROBAT, AND COLOSSO, HIS RUSSIAN STRONG-MAN PARTNER

WHILE THE STALLS AND TENTS WERE BEING ERECTED, TONY AND COLOSSO REHEARSED PART OF THEIR ACT TO AMUSE THE CROWD

FEAST YOUR EYES ON THIS, GENTLEFOLK. YET IT IS NOUGHT TO WHAT YE SHALL SEE TOMORROW

THE STRIPLING AND THE GIANT ARE MIGHTY CLEVER. WE WILL INDEED COME AND WATCH THEM

THE FAIR WILL DRAW PEOPLE FROM FAR AND WIDE.

AT THAT MOMENT THERE CAME A STARTLING INTERRUPTION

AWAY WITH ALL THIS RUBBISH, DOGS! KNOW YE NOT THAT YOU ARE ON THE PROPERTY OF THE BARON DE BASTON? HE HAS GIVEN ORDERS FOR THE GREEN TO BE CLEARED AT ONCE. NO MORE FAIRS WILL BE HELD HERE

COLOSSO SNATCHED UP A SLEDGE-HAMMER MENACINGLY. BUT TONY DREW HIM BACK

HOLD, COLOSSO! THESE ARE THE BARON'S RETAINERS. BLOODSHED WILL NOT HELP. I WILL HAVE WORD WITH THEM

WHAT MEANS THIS? FOR CENTURIES THE ANNUAL FAIR HAS BEEN HELD ON THIS GREEN. PERMISSION WAS GIVEN BY ROYAL CHARTER!

CHARTER? I KNOW OF NO CHARTER! AWAY WITH YOU AND YOUR TRAPS. THE BARON'S ORDERS MUST BE OBEYED

TONY'S EYES FLASHED DEFIANCE

THE FAIR WILL BE HELD. ALDERMAN GOLDSMITH HAS THE CHARTER. I WILL GET IT FROM HIM AND RIDE WITH IT TO THE SHERIFF OF LINCOLN. THE SHERIFF WILL SEE THAT WE HAVE JUSTICE

TONY AND COLOSSO SET OFF AT ONCE FOR THE ALDERMAN'S HOUSE. THEY WERE JUST APPROACHING IT WHEN THE ALDERMAN HIMSELF APPEARED AT A BEDROOM WINDOW

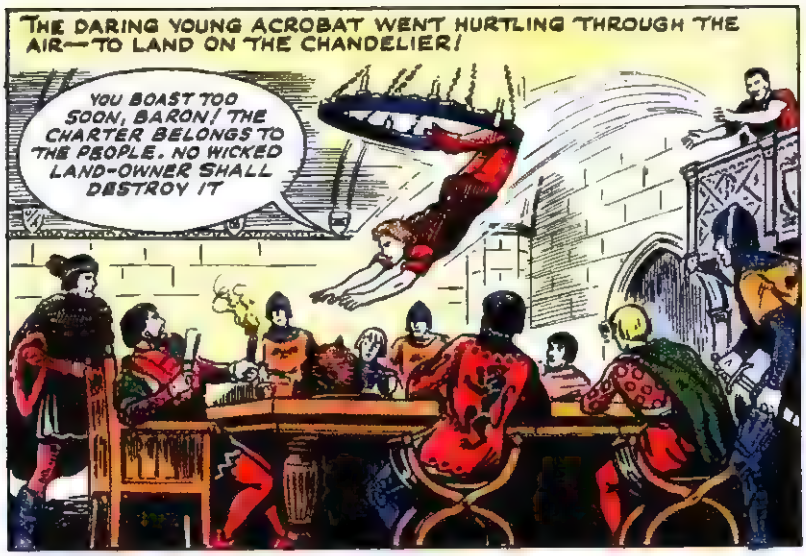
HELP! STOP THAT KNAVE! HE HAS STOLEN THE VILLAGE CHARTER!

HEAR THAT, COLOSSO? WE MUST GET IT BACK!

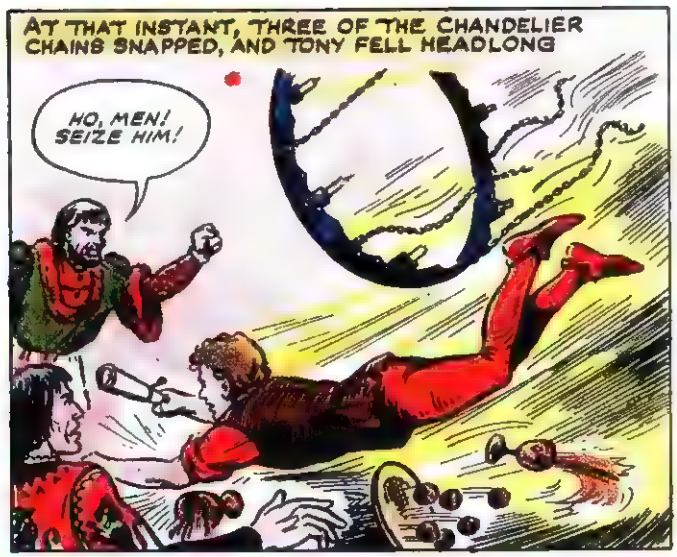
A TALL HEDGE DIVIDED THE PALS FROM THE TRACK USED BY THE THIEF, BUT TONY SWIFTLY SAW A WAY OF GETTING OVER. HE POISED HIMSELF ON THE NEARBY SEE-SAW
JUMP ON THE OTHER END OF THIS PLAYTHING, COLOSSO!
THE RUSSIAN GIANT SAW THROUGH HIS YOUNG PAL'S WILY SCHEME AND BOUNDED FORWARD
I COME, LITTLE BROTHER!
AS COLOSSO'S TREMENDOUS WEIGHT LANDED ON THE SEE-SAW, TONY FLEW THROUGH THE AIR AND--
HAND OVER THE CHARTER, YOU THIEVING HOUND!
ALL AT ONCE THE RIDER SWERVED VIOLENTLY--AND INSTEAD OF LANDING ON THE THIEF, TONY CRASHED TO THE GROUND
THE CHARTER GOES NOT TO A FAIRGROUND PUPPY!
AFTER BATTERING HIS WAY THROUGH THE HEDGE, COLOSSO JOINED HIS PAL--TO FIND HIM EXAMINING A HORSESHOE
SO THE THIEF ESCAPED, LITTLE BROTHER?
YES--BUT HIS MOUNT HAS CAST THIS, SO 'TWILL BE EASY TO FOLLOW ITS TRACKS. LET US FETCH OUR OWN HORSES AND TRAIL THE ROGUE
BEFORE LONG, THE TWO PALS WERE READY TO SET OUT ON THEIR MISSION; AND CONFIDENTLY TONY ADDRESSED THE VILLAGERS
FEAR NOT, MY FRIENDS--THE FAIR WILL BE HELD AS OF YORE. THOUGH WE TEAR ENGLAND APART, WE WILL RECOVER THE CHARTER AND SMASH THE BARON'S SCHEME TO TAKE FROM US OUR RIGHTS!
HURRAH FOR TONY AND COLOSSO!

RIDING HARD, THE CIRCUS PALS DOGGEDLY FOLLOWED THE TRACKS OF THE THIEF'S HORSE. SOON THEY FOUND THEMSELVES BEFOREA GRIM, MOATED CASTLE
THE TWO PALS TETHERED THEIR HORSES AMONG THE TREES, THEN CAUTIOUSLY APPROACHED
'TIS CASTLE BLACKFEN, HOME OF THE BARON DE BASTON! SO THE THIEF HAS TAKEN THE CHARTER TO HIS MASTER
BY THE BLOOD OF THE TARTARS, WE MUST RECOVER IT SOMEHOW. YET I CANNOT STORM A CASTLE WHEN ITS DRAWBRIDGE IS RAISED – EVEN THOUGH THERE BE NO SENTRIES
TONY THOUGHT FOR A MINUTE -- THEN FETCHED A COIL OF ROPE FROM HIS HORSE
YOU HAVE A PLAN, LITTLE BROTHER?
YES, COLOSSO. THIS FORKED SAPLING, HELPED BY YOUR STRENGTH, WILL ENABLE ME TO CROSS THE MOAT. LISTEN!
TONY EXPLAINED HIS SCHEME TO HIS PAL, CROUCHED IN THE FORK, AND --
PULL, COLOSSO! PULL!
COLOSSO THEN RELEASED THE SAPLING, AND TONY WENT SAILING THROUGH THE AIR
IT COULDN'T BE BETTER! I'M GOING STRAIGHT FOR THE WINDOW!
HAVING LANDED, TONY MADE FAST ONE END OF THE ROPE, AND DEFTLY THREW THE OTHER TO HIS PAL
BRAVELY DONE! NOW WHAT DID MY LITTLE BROTHER TELL ME? AH, COLOSSO REMEMBERS. I TIE THIS END TO THE TREE AND THEN SWING ACROSS

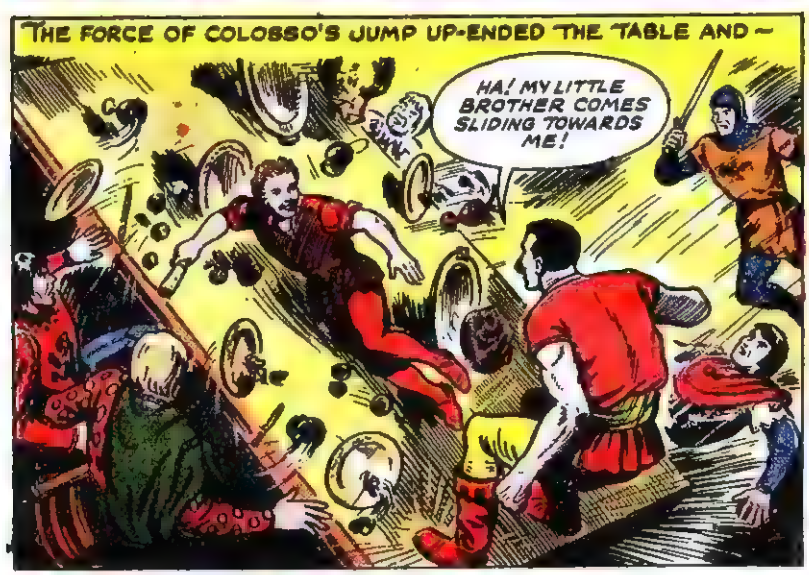
WITHIN A FEW SECONDS COLOSSO WAS ON HIS WAY
THE BARS OF THE WINDOW WERE AS PUTTY IN THE GIANTS HANDS
THE NEXT MINUTE THE TWO PALS WERE INSIDE THE CASTLE
NOW TO FIND THE CHARTER. I HEAR SOUNDS OF REVELRY. THE BARON AND HIS RETAINERS MAKE MERRY. COME, LET US SEE!
CAUTIOUSLY TONY AND COLOSSO TRACKED THE SOUNDS TO THE BANQUET HALL
BY ALL THAT'S WONDERFUL, WE ARRIVE AT A TIMELY MOMENT! SEE – THE THIEF IS IN THE VERY ACT OF HANDING THE CHARTER TO THE BARON!
SO YOU MANAGED TO GET IT FROM THE ALDERMAN? SPLENDID! I WILL BURN IT TO ASHES. NO MORE VILLAGE FAIRS WILL BE HELD ON THE GREEN
REALISING THAT THE CHARTER WAS ABOUT TO BE DESTROYED, TONY SWIFTLY DECIDED TO GO INTO ACTION WITH ONE OF HIS CIRCUS TRICKS
LAUNCH ME TOWARDS YON CHANDELIER. I MUST SAVE THE CHARTER AT ALL COST


THE DARING YOUNG ACROBAT WENT HURTLING THROUGH THE AIR—TO LAND ON THE CHANDELIER!
YOU BOAST TOO SOON, BARON! THE CHARTER BELONGS TO THE PEOPLE. NO WICKED LAND-OWNER SHALL DESTROY IT

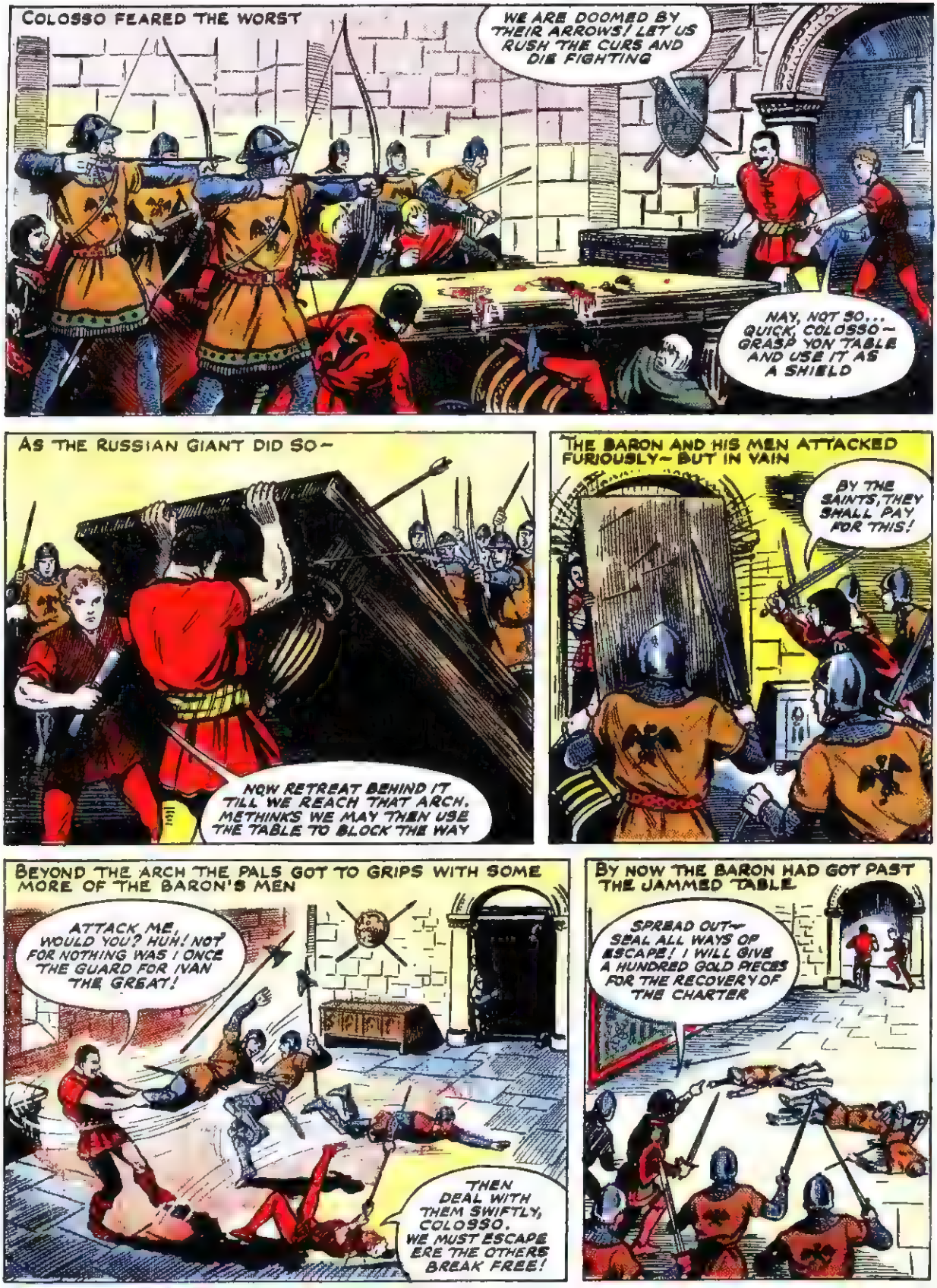
IN A FLASH TONY SNATCHED THE CHARTER FROM THE BARON'S GRASP

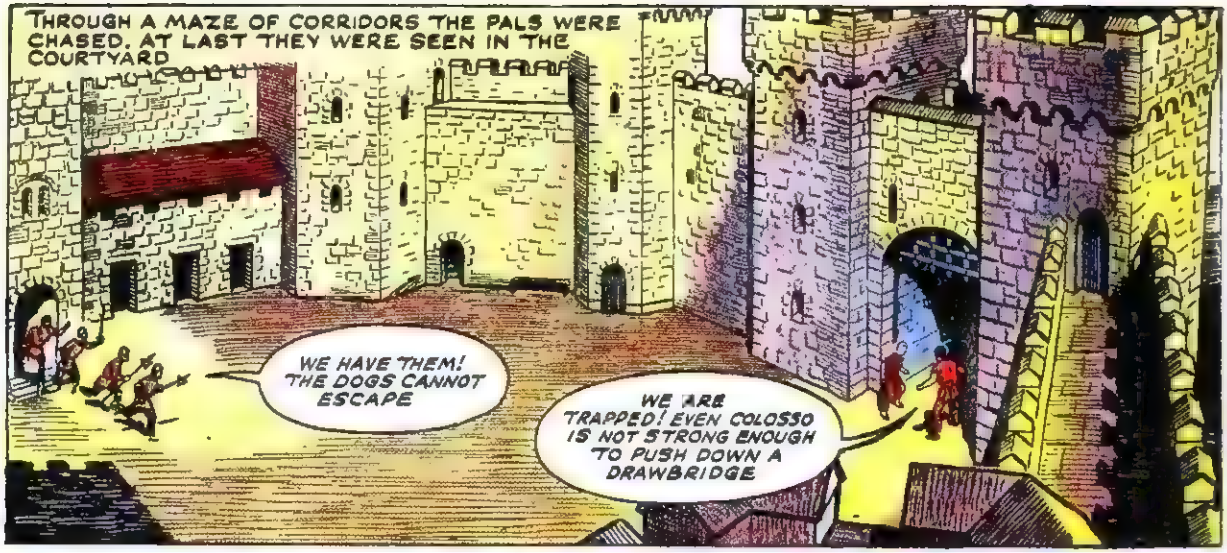

AT THAT INSTANT, THREE OF THE CHANDELIER CHAINS SNAPPED, AND TONY FELL HEADLONG
HO, MEN! SEIZE HIM!

COLOSSO SAW THAT HIS PAL WAS IN PERIL, AND GAVE A GREAT SHOUT
I COME, LITTLE BROTHER! TREMBLE, YE MANGY WOLF PACK. 'TIS COLOSSO YE FACE! I WHO, IN RUSSIA, HURLED BACK THE TARTAR HORDES!


THE FORCE OF COLOSSO'S JUMP UP-ENDED THE TABLE AND—
HA! MY LITTLE BROTHER COMES SLIDING TOWARDS ME!

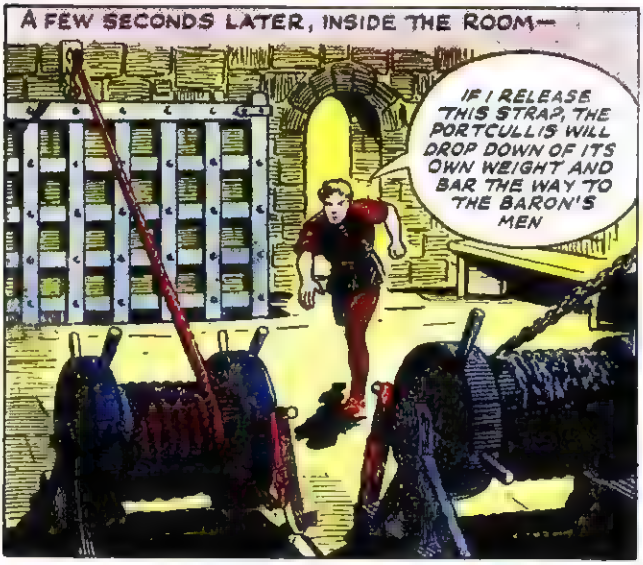
FRANTICALLY THE BARON BELLOWED ORDERS
THE STRIPLING HAS THE CHARTER! ARCHERS! GUARDS! LET HIM NOT ESCAPE WITH IT, OR I'LL CUT YOUR EARS OFF! TAKE HIM DEAD OR ALIVE!


COLOSSO FEARED THE WORST
WE ARE DOOMED BY THEIR ARROWS! LET US RUSH THE CURS AND DIE FIGHTING
NAY, NOT SO... QUICK, COLOSSO — GRASP YON TABLE AND USE IT AS A SHIELD
AS THE RUSSIAN GIANT DID SO —
NOW RETREAT BEHIND IT TILL WE REACH THAT ARCH. METHINKS WE MAY THEN USE THE TABLE TO BLOCK THE WAY
THE BARON AND HIS MEN ATTACKED FURIOUSLY — BUT IN VAIN
BY THE SAINTS, THEY SHALL PAY FOR THIS!
BEYOND THE ARCH THE PALS GOT TO GRIPS WITH SOME MORE OF THE BARON'S MEN
ATTACK ME, WOULD YOU? HUH! NOT FOR NOTHING WAS I ONCE THE GUARD FOR IVAN THE GREAT!
THEN DEAL WITH THEM SWIFTLY, COLOSSO. WE MUST ESCAPE ERE THE OTHERS BREAK FREE!
BY NOW THE BARON HAD GOT PAST THE JAMMED TABLE
SPREAD OUT — SEAL ALL WAYS OF ESCAPE! I WILL GIVE A HUNDRED GOLD PIECES FOR THE RECOVERY OF THE CHARTER

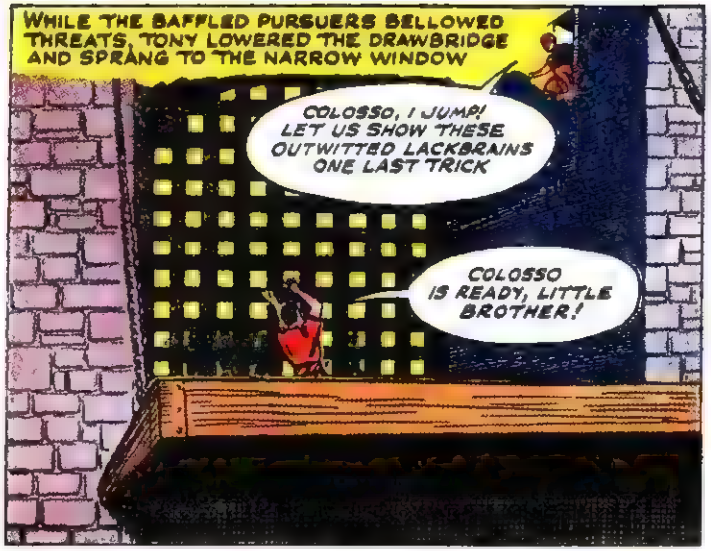

THROUGH A MAZE OF CORRIDORS THE PALS WERE CHASED. AT LAST THEY WERE SEEN IN THE COURTYARD
WE HAVE THEM! THE DOGS CANNOT ESCAPE
WE ARE TRAPPED! EVEN COLOSSO IS NOT STRONG ENOUGH TO PUSH DOWN A DRAWBRIDGE

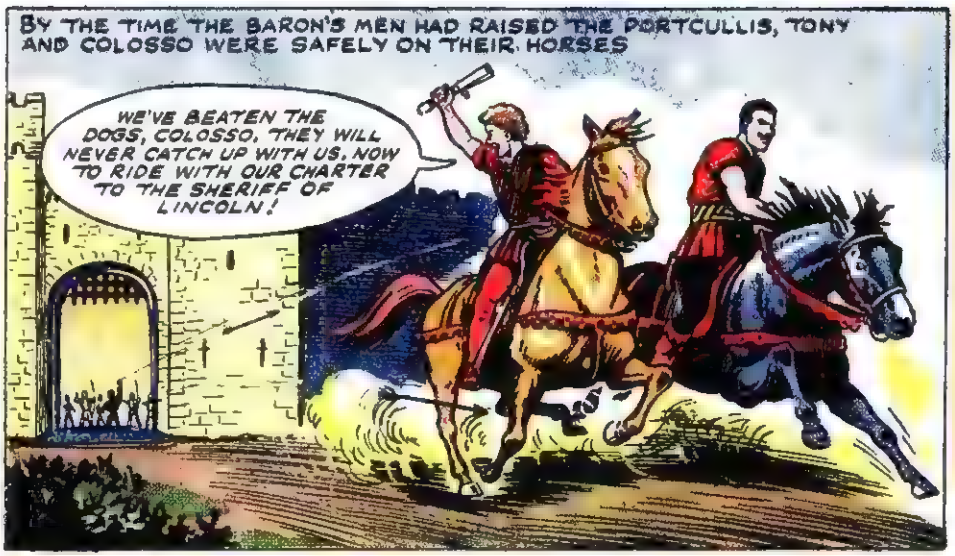
AFTER A MOMENT'S HESITATION, TONY CLAMBERED ON TO COLOSSO'S HUGE SHOULDERS
WE WILL NOT BE CAPTURED-- BLACKFEN VILLAGE SHALL NOT LOSE ITS FAIR! YONDER ROOM HOLDS THE WINCHES FOR LOWERING THE PORTCULLIS AND DRAWBRIDGE. HURL ME UPWARDS!

THE RUSSIAN GIANT'S GREAT ARMS STRAIGHTENED AND--
METHINKS I AM SMALL ENOUGH TO SQUEEZE THROUGH YON SLIT

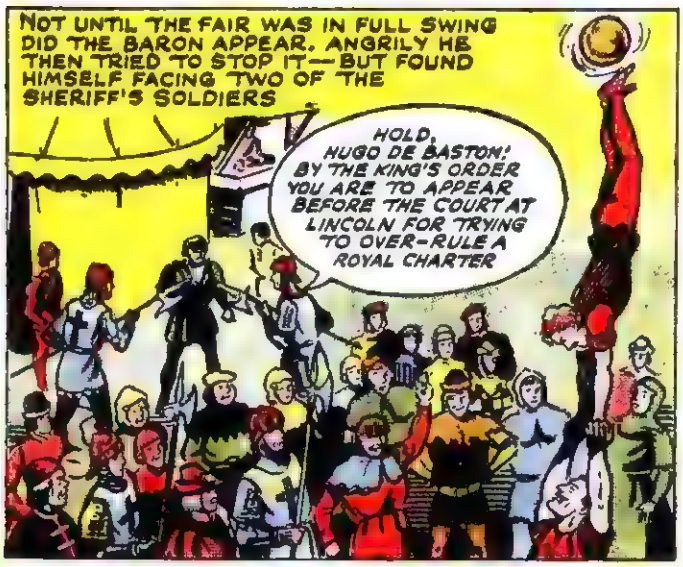

A FEW SECONDS LATER, INSIDE THE ROOM--
IF I RELEASE THIS STRAP, THE PORTCULLIS WILL DROP DOWN OF ITS OWN WEIGHT AND BAR THE WAY TO THE BARON'S MEN

THE PALS' PURSUERS CAME RUSHING UP— THEN STOPPED WITH HOWLS OF RAGE
BACK! THE PORTCULLIS DESCENDS!
BACK FOR YOUR LIVES!


WHILE THE BAFFLED PURSUERS BELLOWED THREATS, TONY LOWERED THE DRAWBRIDGE AND SPRANG TO THE NARROW WINDOW
COLOSSO, I JUMP! LET US SHOW THESE OUTWITTED LACKBRAINS ONE LAST TRICK
COLOSSO IS READY, LITTLE BROTHER!

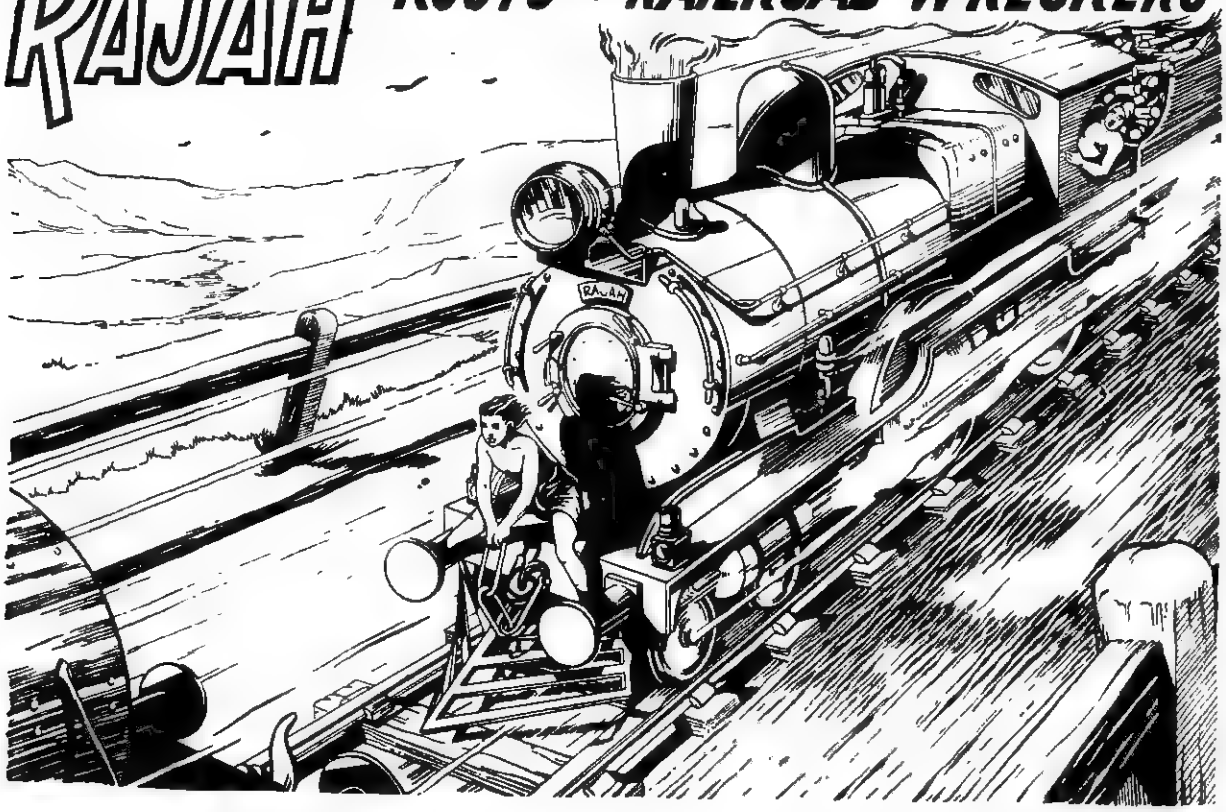

BY THE TIME THE BARON'S MEN HAD RAISED THE PORTCULLIS, TONY AND COLOSSO WERE SAFELY ON THEIR HORSES
WE'VE BEATEN THE DOGS, COLOSSO. THEY WILL NEVER CATCH UP WITH US. NOW TO RIDE WITH OUR CHARTER TO THE SHERIFF OF LINCOLN!

THE PALS HASTENED TO LINCOLN AS FAST AS THEIR HORSES COULD CARRY THEM. THERE THEY TOLD THE SHERIFF ALL THAT HAD HAPPENED, AND SHOWED HIM THE ROYAL CHARTER. REALISING AT ONCE THAT THE BARON HAD GROSSLY EXCEEDED HIS RIGHTS, THE SHERIFF DECIDED TO OPEN THE FAIR HIMSELF — AND TO TAKE A TROOP OF SOLDIERS WITH HIM


NOT UNTIL THE FAIR WAS IN FULL SWING DID THE BARON APPEAR. ANGRILY HE THEN TRIED TO STOP IT — BUT FOUND HIMSELF FACING TWO OF THE SHERIFF'S SOLDIERS
HOLD, HUGO DE BASTON! BY THE KING'S ORDER YOU ARE TO APPEAR BEFORE THE COURT AT LINCOLN FOR TRYING TO OVER-RULE A ROYAL CHARTER

AS THE BARON WAS BEING MARCHED OFF, TONY, SENDING A SPINNING MELON FLYING WITH HIS FEET, GAVE A YELL OF TRIUMPH
BARON DE BASTON — WE CROWN YOU BARON DE MELON!
HA, HA, HA! HO, HO, HO!
THE END

'RAJAH' ROUTS the RAILROAD WRECKERS



By Richard Birnham

KHAIR DIN MAKES AN ENEMY

"COME on, Rajah, old friend. You've got to make this last big climb!"

Khair Din, youngest Indian engine-driver of the Bholpur State Railway, flashed his white teeth in a cheery grin which split his dusky face almost from ear to ear. He patted the side of the cab of "Rajah," the locomotive he was driving, and opened the steam valve wide. Then he glanced at Ahmed, his fireman.

"Keep piling on the coal, Ahmed!" he cried. "We shall need much steam!"

Ahmed paused in his work of shovelling coal into the firebox, and wiped the back of his hand across his sweating forehead.

"Like all new drivers, you are mad!" he shouted above the roar of the thundering engine. "We have twice the normal load—and you expect this old tub to take it up the Bhanipore slope!"

"Rajah's not an old tub!" hooted Khair Din. "You can do it, can't you, Rajah, old bus?"

"I'll-have-a-good-try, I'll-have-a-good-try, I'll-have-a-good-try!" Rajah seemed to answer with its chugging as it tore down the slope which led to the steepest gradient on the route.

Rajah was not the newest engine on the line, but to Khair Din it was absolutely the best. The young engine-driver kept it in perfect trim, and lavished every care on it, polishing its brass, and oiling its moving parts every spare moment he had.

On this run, the supervisor at the lower end of the mountain railway in the foothills of North India had asked him to take four extra coaches up the single-line track to Bholpur. An experienced driver might have refused, saying that the load was too great. But not Khair Din. He was determined to show what his Rajah could do.

Now Rajah began to slow down on the steep, winding incline. The click-clack of wheels on rails grew slower and slower. The blast from the loco's funnel grew louder as the pistons had to work harder and harder.

"Come on, old chap! Come on, old chap! Come on, old chap!" sang Khair Din in a monotone, in time with the engine's chugging.

And Rajah seemed to thunder back:

"I'll-do-my-best, I'll-do-my-best, I'll-do-my-best!"

Slower and slower went the chugging. Khair

The Story of a Young Indian Whose Best Pal was an Engine!

Din was almost tempted to grab the hand-brake, ready to ram it on in case the game loco failed, and he had to stop the heavy train running backwards.

Then at last the gradient eased off. Rajah began to pick up speed again. Only a mile up a gentle incline now, and they'd be in Bholpur.

Khair Din did a war dance of delight on the footplate.

"Well done, Rajah! Well done, Rajah! Well done, Rajah!" he howled in time with the increased speed of the engine's chugging.

"'Twas a-piece-of-cake, a-piece-of-cake, a-piece-of-cake!" Rajah seemed to chuckle back as his pistons picked up speed.

At last the long train came to a halt in Bholpur station. Rajah was uncoupled, and Khair Din backed it off into the engine shed.

The moment he pulled up in the smoky, grimy, building, fellow drivers poured from the nearby canteen and came crowding round him. Mohammed Ali, veteran driver of the line, shook him warmly by the hand.

"Well done, Khair Din!" he greeted. "I hear you brought twelve full-sized coaches up the Bhanipore incline—on your first run, too!"

"Aye, it was a great feat!" cried another old stager. "Not many of us who have driven for years would have attempted it."

Khair Din smiled and shook his head. He jerked a thumb over his shoulder towards Rajah, which was standing hissing steam nearby.

"It wasn't much to do with me!" he grinned. "Rajah did all the work—he is the strongest engine on the line!"

"Nonsense!"

The snapped word made the drivers turn and stare at a newcomer who was pushing his way through their midst. It was Sardat, a lean-faced, crafty-looking loco-driver, who usually kept to himself. He had qualified to drive an engine at the same time as Khair Din, but had been given a rusty old goods loco. Khair Din was suspicious that envy was at the bottom of his present outburst.

Reaching the front of the crowd, Sardat stuck his lean, stubbly features within a few inches of Khair Din's face. Then he turned on the other drivers.

"Fools!" he grated. "Why do you make such a fuss over this young idiot? The supervisor at Pandahar had no right to send such a load up the incline with an inexperienced driver at the controls. There might have been a serious accident."

"But there wasn't!" chuckled Khair Din. "Because Rajah's always in good trim. You want to polish up that rusty old tank engine of yours, Sardat, and then you might be given main line work to do."

Sardat glowered at Khair Din before he strode sulkily away. Mohammed Ali watched him go, and then took Khair Din on one side.

"You want to watch that Sardat," he said meaningly. "I've heard say he's a dangerous enemy."

Khair Din chuckled confidently.

"Thanks for the warning," he said. "Rajah and I will be able to take care of him."

Khair Din worked late that night, cleaning and polishing Rajah, ready for the next day's run. Ahmed the fireman had already left the engine shed, but Khair Din remained. He had liberally applied metal polish to all the brasswork, and was now vigorously polishing the gleaming brass disc on the front of the engine's boiler.

Peering into the brightly gleaming brass, he saw something that made him whip round, every nerve alert for trouble.

For he had seen a furtive figure slinking towards him across the dimly-lit engine shed. The figure took advantage of every available piece of cover, almost as if it didn't want to be seen.

Khair Din was instantly alert, because just recently, there had been a number of cases of sabotage on the Bholpur State Railway. Some of the hill tribesmen objected to the railway running over their territory, and were always out to do as much damage to it as they could. All engine-drivers were on the look-out for mysterious attacks on their locomotives.

But as Khair Din whipped round, the figure came out into the open and stood there, defiant and hostile.

It was Sardat!

"What-ho, Sardat!" grinned Khair Din. "Come to see if you can pick up any hints about how to keep an engine in good trim?"

Sardat glowered. He bent over a nearby drum and took from it a large handful of cotton waste which was dripping with black treacly oil.

"I have had enough of your taunts, Khair Din!" he snapped viciously. "I've come to show you what I think of you and your precious Rajah. Perhaps this will take you down a peg!"

And Sardat hurled the wodge of oily rag straight at Khair Din!

Khair Din saw it coming and ducked like lightning.

Splodge!

The thick, oily, messy cotton waste landed smack on the gleaming brass plate that he'd spent so much time polishing till it shone.

"Why, you—you low-down rat!" howled Khair Din.

For a second or two he stared in anger at the awful mess on the front of Rajah's boiler. Then he took a flying leap from the small platform at the front of the engine, the light of battle in his eyes.

"Just let me get at you!" he roared. "Can't keep your own engine clean! Have to come round

here throwing dirt at another man's work. I'll knock your head off! I'll—"

But Sardat hadn't waited to feel the weight of Khair Din's angry fists. He was in full flight—scuttling off across the engine shed as fast as his legs would carry him.

Khair Din tore after him, determined to teach him a lesson. Sardat zig-zagged between two stationary locos, and then shot out of the engine shed door.

Khair Din emerged from the door, just in time to see Sardat dive between two long rows of carriages standing in some nearby sidings. The young engine-driver pounded after his rival.

Reaching the cinder path between the two sidings, Khair Din put on a spurt. In the dusk it was difficult to see, although there were a few floodlights in the sidings. He'd have to go all out, or he might lose his man.

Biff, thud!

A portly figure had emerged from between two sections of coaches. Before he could pull up, Khair Din cannoned headlong into him. Both went down full length on the cinders.

Khair Din dragged himself to his feet and stared in dismay at the man he had just knocked down.

He was a white man—Mr. Hannington, Inspector of the Depot. The big noise of Bholpur railway yards. Khair Din's own boss. And he was fuming with rage.

"Mr. Hannington, Sahib!" gasped Khair Din. "I am most sorry!"

Mr. Hannington seemed to explode.

"You—you young hooligan!" he roared. "So this is how our new engine-drivers behave when they're given charge of main line locos? Get back to your engine at once!"

"But sahib, I was chasing someone who was interfering with my work. Did he not come this way?"

"A likely story!" barked Mr. Hannington. "I saw no one. Return to your locomotive. You will hear more of this!"

Khair Din went, bewildered. What had happened to Sardat? Why had he so deliberately created trouble for him?

The young engine-driver didn't realise that Sardat had nipped under one of the lines of coaches and had doubled back towards the engine shed, a light in his eyes that boded evil for Khair Din and Rajah!

TREACHERY

"BY my father's beard. Someone's been in Rajah's cab while I've been away!" Khair Din had returned to the engine shed. The first thing he had done was to remove all the grease and dirt which Sardat had flung over the loco's front, and polish the brass plate again. Then he had worked his way along the brass rail at the side of the boiler, cleaning off all the brass polish as he went, leaving the rail bright and shining.

Now he was poised on the step of the cab, staring at part of the brass railing which lined the edge of the canopy.

In the thick white of the brass polish was the large smear of a man's hand-print.

"Why should anyone board Rajah at this time of night?" he muttered. "The inspectors only come aboard by day. Unless—"

Khair Din drew a deep breath at the thought which struck him.

"Sabotage!" he gasped. "Has someone been on Rajah to do damage to it?"

Khair Din was polishing the brass disc on the front of his engine. Suddenly he gave a gasp. For reflected in the disc he could see a sinister figure slinking across the engine shed!

Khair Din's eyes darted everywhere, looking for signs of someone having tampered with controls, gauges, steam pipes, or other vital parts of the engine.

Suddenly his gaze was attracted to the footplate. A few small pieces of coal lay there, in a little group, close to the front end of the tender.

"What's that doing there?" Khair Din breathed. "I swept the footplate most carefully."

Next second, Khair was up on the footplate, staring at the coal in the tender. Most unlikely that anyone would steal coal from a loco. There were plenty of coal dumps in darkness outside in the yard. Then what had the intruder been up to? Had he been tampering with Rajah's coal?

Khair Din pulled aside one or two lumps of fuel. His fingers thrust into the cracks and crevices between the pieces. Suddenly—

"Ah!"

With a startled gasp, he held up a small metal cylinder—a cylinder which might easily have been unnoticed by the fireman when he came to shovel coal into the firebox the next morning.

Khair Din at once recognised it for the deadly thing it was, and gave a gasp of astonishment.

It was a charge of explosive—a blasting charge, like those used in the local quarries!

"If Ahmed had shovelled that into the firebox in the morning it would have been a case of bang!—and no Rajah for me to drive again!" he exclaimed.

"This means that unknown enemies have been at work!"

Already fierce suspicions were forming in his brain. Was it a coincidence that Sardat had lured him away from Rajah at the same time as the saboteurs had struck! Was Sardat in league with the unknown enemies of the railway?

"I must report this to Mr. Hannington Sahib!" he said to himself. "But first I wish to see if I can pick up another clue. Mr. Hannington Sahib is angry with me at the moment. I must be sure that I know what I am talking about."

The loco drivers were billeted in huts quite close to the sidings. Khair Din made his way to the one occupied by Sardat. A light was shining in the window. Khair Din crept up to it and peered inside.

There was Sardat, lounging on his charpoy—or Indian-type bed. He was looking at a piece of paper held in his hand, and Khair Din gasped as he looked at that hand.

The palm was covered in white brass polish!

"Then it must have been Sardat himself who tried to get Rajah blown up!" he gasped.

Khair Din was about to creep away when his attention was held by the piece of paper in Sardat's hand. On it, in crude Indian handwriting, were the words:

"Road 11. Tanker 39. 5.30."

Khair Din's eyes narrowed. Road 11 was the name of the siding which served the Bholpur Oil Company's depot on the far side of the goods yard. Presumably oil tanker No. 39 was parked on that siding, and Sardat had been detailed to carry out some sabotage on it—probably at 5.30 in the morning—just before dawn.

Khair Din's first instinct was to report the matter to Mr. Hannington, and then he checked himself.

"Hannington Sahib might not believe me," he told himself. "And Sardat is very cunning. He would say he knew nothing. I must keep my eye on him and catch him in his treacherous act."

Just before dawn next morning, Khair Din was wide awake. He peered out of his hut window. Across the other side of the yard, he saw a shadowy figure detach itself from one of the huts there, and creep furtively towards the sidings.

"Sardat!" breathed Khair Din. "Now I get on his trail."

Khair Din dropped lightly out of his hut window, and next moment was weaving his way across the yard, heading for road 11.

Road 11 ran alongside the Bholpur Oil Refinery. Midway along it was a gantry with a pipe from a huge oil container alongside the rail. From this pipe the oil tank trucks were filled. The whole siding was on a slight slope.

The tankers were marshalled empty at the top of the siding. One by one they were allowed to roll down the siding, were then stopped with their own brakes under the filler pipe, and as soon as they had been loaded with inflammable petrol, were allowed to run on down the siding to await collection by the shunting engine.

A group of loaded petrol tankers were now standing at the lower end of the siding, only divided from the main line by a set of hand-operated points. And on the end one of these was painted the number "39"!

Khair Din reached the end of a line of trucks on an adjoining siding, and stood there, staring horrified at the terrible thing that Sardat was doing.

Sardat had already pulled over the lever of the hand-operated points on to the main line. Now he was climbing aboard tanker No. 39. Next moment he released the hand brake of the tanker—and the big truck detached itself from the group and began to trundle down the gentle slope towards the main line.

"Hulaya! The morning mixed goods express is due up from the plain at 5.45!" gasped Khair Din. "Unless I can do something to stop it, that tanker will crash into the express at full speed. And if the fire of the engine sets light to the petrol that will probably splash from the tanker, the whole lot will go up in flames!"

Khair Din began to sprint frantically towards the petrol tanker as fast as he could run.

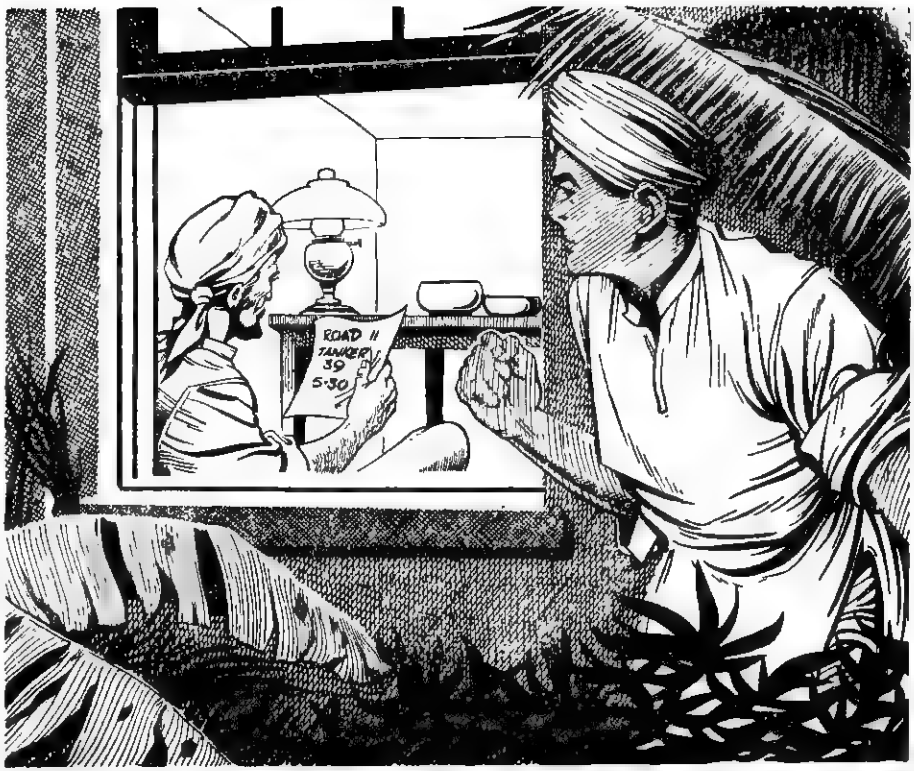
WALKING—AT 50 M.P.H.

WITH a flying leap, Khair Din launched himself upward, out-stretched hands grasping at the edge of the chassis of the already fast-moving tanker.

Next moment he had hauled himself aboard, and was carefully picking his way along to where Sardat was crouched over the brake lever.

Something suddenly seemed to warn Sardat that Khair Din was there. The man wheeled, caught sight of him, and snarled like an animal at bay.

"You—Khair Din!" he rasped harshly. "By the great white elephant, you shall not stop my plan now. This tanker will crash into the morning express and wreck it. It will be a great and triumphant blow for my people!"



Peering cautiously through the window, Khair Din watched the engine-driver whom he suspected of being a traitor. Did the note the man was studying contain instructions to wreck the railroad?

"You traitor!" roared Khair Din. "I knew you were at the bottom of the sabotage when you tried to plant that charge in Rajah's coal. But you failed, and now—"

Khair Din launched himself forward. His idea was to knock Sardat away from the brake lever and ram it on, bringing the truck to a halt.

Thwack! His fist shot out and connected with Sardat's chin.

Sardat reeled, a glassy look in his eyes. He tottered for a moment on the edge of the truck, hands clawing out for a hold. One hand grasped Khair Din's turban and pulled it from his head.– The other grabbed the young engine-driver's dhoti.

Then Sardat fell from the tanker, pulling Khair Din with him.

And the tanker, with no one aboard to check its headlong rush down the long incline to the plains twelve miles away, went hurtling on down the main line!

Thud!

Khair Din and Sardat landed on the embankment with a sickening bump. But Khair Din was on top, and Sardat's body saved him from injury. The traitor to the railway lay where he had fallen, out to the wide, but Khair Din staggered to his feet.

"I must stop that runaway tanker somehow!" he gasped.

The Bholpur State Railway had very little in the way of a signalling system, so that the local signalman could not warn the express of the danger that threatened it. And the main line was a single track for at least ten miles. It seemed that nothing could prevent the tanker from crashing into the express.

A daring scheme flashed to Khair Din's brain.

"Rajah!" he gasped. "Rajah is the only one that can save the express!"

Next moment he was sprinting across to the yard where his engine stood, just inside the engine shed. Ahmed was already there, stoking up the fire to get a head of steam ready for the day's work. Swiftly Khair Din told Ahmed what had happened as he set the locomotive rolling down the siding, heading for the main line.

Khair Din suddenly realised that the points ahead were not connected to the main line. Leaping from Rajah's cab, he raced the engine to the points lever. He pulled the lever just in time. Belching smoke from its funnel, the engine swung on to the main single-line track.

Khair Din leapt aboard and flung the throttle wide. Rajah's pistons pounded faster and faster.

"Come on, Rajah—come on, Rajah—come on, Rajah!" sang Khair Din, in time with the blast of the loco's chugging.

"I'm getting along—I'm getting along—I'm getting along!" Rajah seemed to roar in reply.

Trees and shrubs swished by on either side; telegraph poles whirred past so fast they began to look like a fence. The lone loco rocked like a ship on a rough sea. Khair Din and Ahmed had to hang on for dear life.

And ahead the runaway tanker was rocketing down the long incline, heading nearer, ever nearer, to the morning express which was toiling up from the plains below.

Tense-faced, Khair Din peered out of the side of the cab.

"There it is!" he cried.

Ahmed peered out of his side of the cab. Just disappearing round the bend ahead was the runaway tanker. It was rocking wildly, and doing at least fifty miles an hour. The fireman flashed a glance across at Khair Din.

"How are you going to stop it?" he jerked.

"You take over the controls!" Khair Din snapped back. "I'm going for a walk!"

Next moment, Khair Din had swung himself out of the cab and was climbing along the catwalk at the side of the bucking loco, gripping the brass rail with knuckles that gleamed white with the strain.

It was a piece of acrobatic walking to make a man's hair stand on end. There was little foothold, and the engine was rocking so wildly that at any moment Khair Din expected to be jolted off—to his death.

Inch by inch he edged his way along to the front of Rajah. At last he was crouching on the small platform at the front, hanging on for dear life.

Rajah, under power, gradually began to overhaul the runaway. Khair Din got down flat and began to fish for the connecting chain that hung from the coupling of the loco. Finally he grabbed it.

Nearer and nearer Rajah thundered to the runaway. Khair Din knew they couldn't be far now from the express coming in the other direction. He had to shut his mind to the awful vision of what would happen if he was too late in his rescue bid—if Rajah, the tanker, and the express, all collided.

The tanker was rocking wildly. Khair Din's eyes narrowed as he held the connecting chain out. Rajah's buffers came nearer and nearer to the runaway tanker.

Then Khair Din flung the end link of the chain towards the tanker's coupling hook as if he were a hoopla player throwing a ring at a prize on a fair sideshow.

For one awful moment Khair Din thought he had missed. But then—

"Done it!" he gasped.

The chain link had landed neatly over the tanker's coupling-hook. Khair Din clawed himself upright and waved to Ahmed.

Khair Din heard the grinding sound as Ahmed applied Rajah's brakes full on. Climbing back along the catwalk to the driver's cab, Khair Din glanced ahead. A plume of steam showed where the express was thundering towards them up the incline.

There was still the peril of collision!

Back in the cab, Khair Din helped bring Rajah to a final, shuddering halt.

Already the express was coming round the bend two hundred yards ahead, going as fast as the driver could make it, trying to keep up speed for the final run up the steep incline.

Khair Din acted quicker than he'd ever done before. He slapped Rajah into reverse and opened the steam valve as quickly as he could without the loco's driving wheels skidding on the metals.

"Come on, Rajah!" called Khair Din. "You've got to go like the wind now!"

Chug, chug, chug!

The game loco responded, and began to pick up speed. The gap between the tanker and the express still shrank alarmingly quickly.

Suddenly the plume of smoke from the express loco died away. The driver had seen them! He had shut off steam!

The gap ceased to close. Rajah drew ahead. Khair Din breathed a sigh of relief. There would be no collision!

When Rajah arrived back in Bholpur a hundred yards ahead of the express, and the driver of the latter explained to Mr. Hannington what had happened, Khair Din received a terrific ovation. He was carried shoulder high from the station platform back to his quarters.

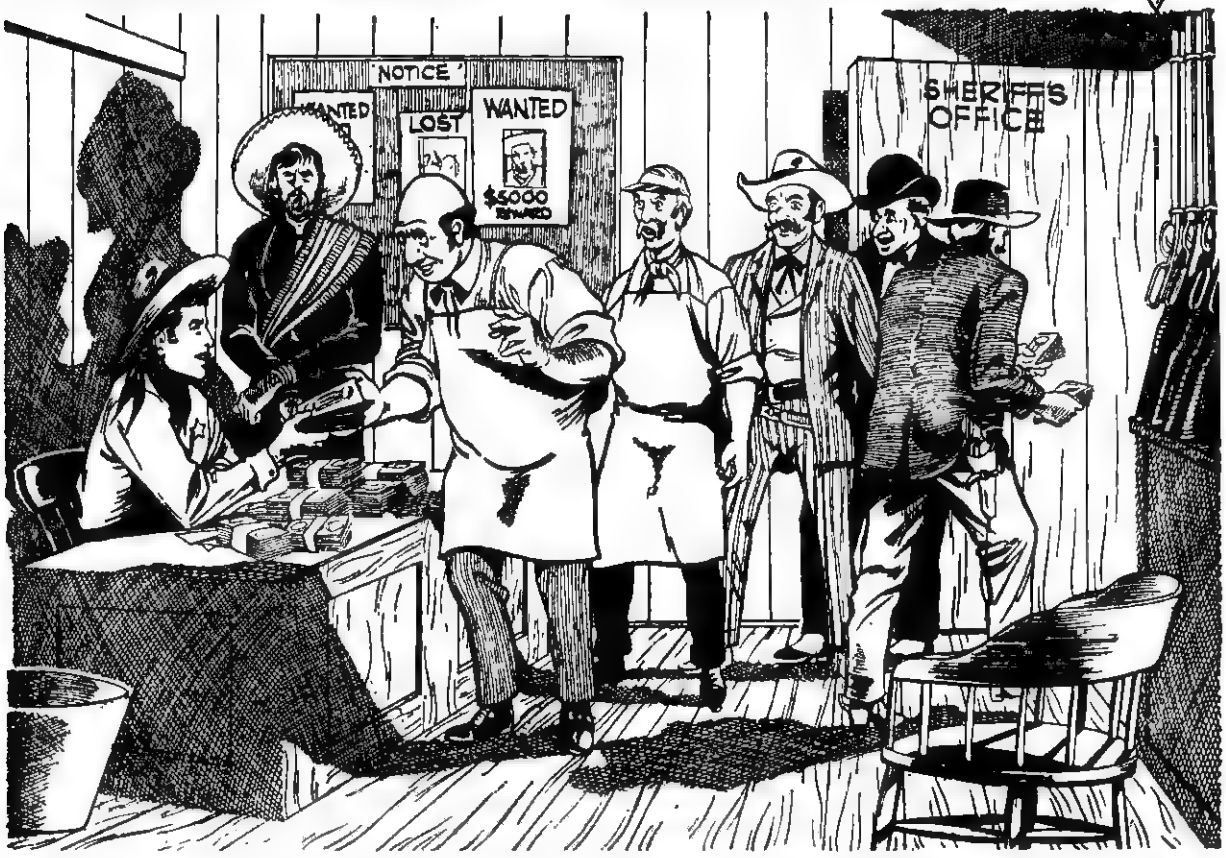
Sardat was picked up where he had fallen from the runaway, still unconscious. When he came round, he saw that his game was up, and confessed that he was a traitor to the railway, working for the line's enemies by sabotaging both track and rolling stock. He was promptly handed over to the police.

Khair Din was the hero of the day. But at a feast given in his honour that evening, he refused to take all the credit.

"Thank Ahmed, too!" he beamed at his fellow drivers. "He took over the controls. And if it hadn't been for Rajah there—" he pointed to where the loco stood on a siding not far away "—I'd never have been able to do it! Hurray for Rajah!"

SHERIFF SPIKE RACKET-BUSTER!

BY DEREK KNIGHT



DOUBLE-CROSSED!

OUTSIDE the Sheriff's office in Cordite, a sallow-faced Mexican swung up into the saddle of his horse and waved a cheery hand at Spike Naylor, who leaned in the open doorway.

"So long, Spike!" he called in a loud voice. "I reckon may be I look in an' see you again to-morrow."

Sheriff Spike merely grunted, and turned back into the office with a frown.

"That guy Mendoza hangs around me like a shadow," he snorted. "Every day he comes in here on some excuse, and wastes my time gossiping. If I go down to the saloon for a meal, I find him sitting beside me! If I saddle up Flame an' ride out to one of the ranches around here, you can bet Mendoza will join me on the trail. An' I don't like him—I reckon he's snaky!"

"Aw, maybe he just likes being seen around with the great Spike Naylor," said Rod Hallam, Spike's deputy. "But that ain't what's really worrying you, Spike. I can see you've got something on your mind."

"You're dead right," answered Spike grimly. "An' it's something I don't know how to deal with. A few weeks ago I was welcome anywhere in Cordite, because I've cleaned up quite a few badmen here since I took the job of Sheriff. But in the last month, things have changed, Rod! When I get in the saloon, the boss there, Hank Wyman, acts like I was a stick o' dynamite that might go off any minute!"

"Yeah, I noticed that," nodded Rod. "He acts very polite, but you get the feeling that underneath it all he don't like you a bit, Spike! It's durned queer!"

"He's not the only one!" grunted Spike. "All the big ranchers an' all the most important citizens in town are acting the same way towards me. It's a bad feeling, Rod."

"Sure," agreed Rod, scratching his head helplessly. "I've asked one or two folk about it, but they won't talk."

"I know," said Spike moodily. "They just sort of force a laugh and pretend there's nothin' wrong! But when folks stop trusting the man they

He Became a Wild West Bandit—To Prove He Wasn't One

elected as Sheriff, he's got to find out why. Or else pack up and go."

"You wouldn't do that, Spike!" cried Rod anxiously. "You've jest *got* to find out what's wrong."

"I'm going to!" snapped Spike, his jaw tightening. "If these folks won't come out in the open an' tell me what they've got against me, then I'll have to trick one of them into opening up! I've got an idea that's worth trying . . . but I'm playing it alone, Rod, just in case anything goes wrong!"

Late that night, Spike rode silently through the deserted side-streets of Cordite until he reached the back of the big saloon and hotel. The hoofs of his horse, Flame, were muffled in strips of blanket. Instead of his usual bright check shirt, Spike was wearing a plain one, and he also wore a black neckerchief knotted loosely about his throat.

He left Flame in the shadows, and moved on foot to a small window at the side of the saloon. It was closed, but not locked, and Spike eased it slowly open. Then he paused, and pulled up the black neckerchief so that it hid his face up to the eyes!

Hank Wyman, the proprietor, was just finishing his task of sweeping up the saloon ready for the next day, when a masked figure appeared in the doorway leading from the kitchen. Two guns pointed unwaveringly at Hank.

"Reach!" growled Spike in a disguised voice. "Get 'em up high. That's right, mister. Now move over while I collect the takings you've got in that drawer behind the counter."

A faint bitter grin crossed Hank's face, and he shrugged.

"You act pretty cool," snarled Spike, crossing to the counter. "Mebbe you reckon your Sheriff, Spike Naylor, will get me for this. All you folks seem to reckon he's a wonderful guy."

"That's what *you* think!" burst out Hank in a sudden spasm of anger. "Spike Naylor's a durned sight more of a crook than you are! Take a look in that drawer, and you'll find only a few bucks there. Spike Naylor's got the rest!"

Spike jerked open the drawer, then glared up at Hank. His pulses were leaping with excitement, for he sensed that if he played his cards well now, he might learn the answer to why he had suddenly become unpopular around Cordite.

"You trying to make a fool of me, mister?" he growled. "What's all this double-talk about Naylor, huh? An' where's the rest of the takings?"

"You should have called another night," returned Hank with a bleak smile. "Spike Naylor's stooge, Mendoza, was here soon after I closed. He collected a hundred dollars from me—like he does every week. And I'm not the only one! Ask any of the folks in this town who've got a bit of money.

"Spike Naylor's a durned sight more of a crook than you are!" snapped the saloon-keeper. He'd have eaten his words if he'd known that the masked gunman was Sheriff Spike Naylor!

Ask any of the big ranchers. They'll tell you how Spike Naylor's no better than the badmen he's clapped in jail!"

"Eh? How come?" snapped Spike.

"It'd be more than my business is worth if I told anyone else," said Hank wearily. "But I guess it don't matter about you. Here's how it works. Spike Naylor sends Mendoza round to all the business folks and ranchers who've got money, and Mendoza says: 'You pay me so many dollars every week, an' Spike Naylor will see that no

badmen make trouble for *you*!' D'you get it, Mister Bandit?"

"You mean if you didn't pay, Spike Naylor would tip off some badmen that they could rob this joint without meetin' any trouble from him?" gasped Spike in his disguised voice.

"Sure!" sneered Hank. "I only pay a hundred bucks a week. Some of the big ranchers pay a lot more, so they won't have their cattle rustled! Spike Naylor fixes a price so that it's just about worth our while to pay money to him, rather than get ruined by the badmen. If he was an out-and-out crook like you, mister, I wouldn't mind so much! But this business of playing crook behind a sheriff's badge . . . well, it sticks in my throat!"

Spike had heard all he wanted to know! His plan for making Hank talk had worked! He was glad there was practically nothing in the cash-drawer—for it saved him the trouble of finding some round-about way of returning the money to Hank later!

"Huh! So I'm unlucky!" growled Spike, backing towards the kitchen door. "You can keep your few miserable dollars, mister!"

"That's mighty decent of you!" said Hank bitterly. "By hokey, I'd like to tell Spike Naylor what I think of him! But Mendoza says we gotta keep our mouths shut—even to Spike himself! If we don't, he'll get real mad an' make bad trouble for us!"

PERIL ON THE MOUNTAIN

TWO minutes later Spike was astride Flame, heading for the outskirts of Cordite where Mendoza lived alone in a small shack.

"The crafty coyote!" he muttered to himself. "Now I see why he's always hangin' around me! It's to make folks think we're great buddies, so they won't suspect anything when he uses *my* name to demand money from them!"

Fifty yards from the shack, Spike reined to a halt. He was just about to dismount when he heard the soft clop of hooves. In the faint moonlight, he could make out the figure of Mendoza riding away towards the distant hills at an easy pace.

Spike's brain was racing.

"Now let's get this figured out before I go into action," he murmured under his breath. "Why is Mendoza heading out into the hills? H'mm! . . . He must have collected a lot of money these past few weeks, and he wouldn't put it in the bank because the bank-manager might ask awkward questions. It'd be risky hiding all that dough in his hut, so I guess he must have a hide-out in the hills—some place where he's stored a whole pile of dollars!"

With a gentle pressure of his knees, Spike sent Flame moving silently forward in pursuit of the Mexican.

Mendoza headed steadily along a narrow, rocky trail which wound high into the hills. In the darkness behind him came Spike Naylor, the muffled hooves of his horse making barely a sound.

It was an hour later when there came a startling interruption to that silent pursuit. Mendoza was rounding a curve on a mountain pass, with a sheer drop to his left. Suddenly a mountain lion, on the hunt for prey, bounded from a patch of scrub, almost under the nose of the Mexican's horse.

Spike heard a fierce, menacing snarl, followed by a whinny of terror. He spurred forward, and was just in time to see Mendoza's horse rear up on its hind-legs.

It was all so unexpected that the Mexican was flung backwards from the saddle. He hit the ground, rolled, and with a cry of fear he vanished over the edge of the mountainside.

"Jumpin' bullfrogs!" jerked out Spike, his hand flashing to his gun.

The mountain lion, too, had been startled by the sudden encounter. Already it was bounding away.

Mendoza had managed to save himself for the moment, but he was hanging by one hand only. It was a poor grip, and his fingers were slipping! Spike flung himself flat on the ground, parallel with the edge, straddling his legs wide, and digging the fingers of one hand into the rough ground. His other hand closed like a vice round Mendoza's wrist—and at that very instant, Mendoza's grip gave way completely!

He fell, and was brought up short with a sudden jerk, to hang swinging at the end of Spike's extended arm! Desperately the Sheriff of Cordite pressed himself against the ground, clinging on with toes dug well in to avoid being dragged over the edge.

Choking with fear, and dazed with surprise at the sudden appearance of his rescuer, Mendoza began to babble out frantic appeals.

"Senor . . . Senor Naylor . . . save me! Pull me up!" he croaked.

Tense with the strain, Spike smiled grimly at the thought that he was trying to save his enemy!

"Quit hollering and struggling, you no-good coyote!" he snapped. "Listen! I can't get enough grip to pull you straight up—so I guess I'll have to swing you. This is going to be tough—so you'd better start hopin' that I can make it!"

Slowly Spike began to swing the man who hung by the wrist from his extended arm. Mendoza was no lightweight! The swing grew longer and slower, like the movement of a great pendulum, as Mendoza began to swing steadily higher on either side.

It was a tremendous feat of strength. Spike felt his heart thumping, and the blood pounded dizzily in his head as he gripped and swung with every ounce of power he could summon.

Mendoza swung up . . . up . . . .higher than the horizontal . . . a few inches higher than the brink itself—and then with a twist and a heave he was jerked to safety!

Spike slumped for a few seconds, utterly exhausted, with grey mists of dizziness swirling in his brain. Then he lifted his head and saw Mendoza on one knee, a gun in his hand!

"Many thanks, my friend Spike!" said the Mexican in voice of mingled scorn and wonderment. "It seems you have found out my clever little game . . . and I ask myself how you can be such a big fool as to save my life!"

He laughed, coldly and without mirth.

"Maybe you think I will be grateful, huh? But you are wrong, Spike! A fool must pay for his stupidity. You will have time to be very sorry that you rescued me. Not much time, my friend—you know too much to live!"

SAVED BY HIS SPUR

IT was dawn. Spike lay on the rocky floor of a cave, deep in the hills. His holsters were empty. His hands were bound in front of him with thin raw-hide. Just outside the cave, Mendoza was cooking himself a breakfast of canned beans. Flame and the Mexican's horse were tethered somewhere nearby.

"So you found out about me, and you followed me to find where I'd hidden the money?" chuckled Mendoza. "Well . . . now you have found the place, Spike. You have seen the money—nearly ten thousand dollars!"

"Sure—and you've stacked it in your saddlebags now," said Spike drily, "so I guess you're not going back to Cordite. You'll be headin' for other parts, Mendoza. The only thing that puzzles me is why you haven't finished me off before now!"

"I like to take my time, and plan carefully!" grinned Mendoza. "You will understand soon, Spike!"

When he had eaten, Mendoza made Spike get to his feet. At the point of a gun, Spike was marched across a long stretch of rough ground to a small, basin-shaped hollow. In the middle of the hollow rose a gnarled and twisted tree.

Mendoza took another length of raw-hide and threw it over a branch of the tree some few feet above Spike's head. He knotted one end between Spike's tightly bound wrists, then pulled on the other end so that Spike's arms were hauled straight up above his head.

"I guess you won't give any trouble like that, my friend," said Mendoza with a wolfish grin, as he knotted the free end of the rope round the trunk of the tree. "Now I gotta go an' find a little pal to keep you company. I'll try not to keep you waitin'!"

Half-an-hour went by before Mendoza returned. He was carrying a sack with something in it, and he was handling the sack very gingerly. Spike heard an angry rattling noise coming from the sack, and his lips tightened. He knew that sound!

Mendoza had caught a rattle-snake!

"Here's your little pal!" grinned the Mexican. "Like I said, I make good plans, Spike! If you just disappear, or if they find you shot, then maybe somebody might think it was queer that Mendoza had disappeared at the same time. Rod Hallam an' one or two of your friends might get curious."

"Rod Hallam will just about take you apart, Mendoza," gritted Spike.

But the Mexican merely shook with laughter.

"Ah, no!" he cried. "That is where I am clever. When the rattle-snake has finished with you, I will put you on your horse and ride back to the outskirts of Cordite. I will cut away your bonds, and put the guns in your holsters! Then I will turn your horse loose, and he will carry you into Cordite!"

"I get it!" snapped Spike. "The folks will think that I got bitten by a rattle-snake, but managed to get in the saddle and head for home before the poison worked! You've sure worked out every detail, Mendoza—you treacherous rat."

Mendoza chuckled, and flung down the sack a few feet from Spike. It began to writhe and heave as the snake sought to escape.

"So long, Spike," Mendoza grinned. "I gotta few things to see to back at the cave."

He turned and disappeared over the ridge.

Spike knew that within a minute or two the angry snake would fight its way out. With a prickly feeling down his spine, he turned his back and continued the work that he had been doing while Mendoza had searched for the snake. It was awkward, wearying work.

By leaning back and lifting one leg, Spike could jab at the rawhide thong round the tree-trunk with the rowels of his spur!

"If only Mendoza hadn't come back so soon!" panted Spike, scraping and pecking desperately with his spurred heel.

Behind him, the rattling sounded suddenly louder! Spike drew a deep breath, then jerked his feet off the ground so that his full weight came on the rawhide which was looped, pulley-fashion, over the branch above his head.

And with that sudden jerk, the thong snapped at the point where he had worn it thin.

Spike whirled to face the escaped rattle-snake. His hands were still tightly-bound, but he could move about freely now. He took a pace back, with the ten-foot length of rawhide trailing from his bound wrists.

To run would be useless. When he emerged from the hollow, Mendoza would see him—and a bullet would be his reward.

Awkwardly Spike got a grip on the long rawhide thong. The snake's head reared up menacingly, and with a quick flick of his fingers Spike sent the thong flashing out like a whip! It curled round the rattle-snake just below the head. Another expert flick sent a half-hitch curling down the thong to tighten round the snake!

"I never hog-tied a rattler before!" muttered Spike huskily.

Then, with the deadly creature trapped at the end of the thong, he whirled it round several times in a wide circle, writhing and helpless, before thudding it against the trunk of the tree. Two seconds later the venomous reptile lay dead under his heel.

"Phew!" croaked Spike, lifting his hand to drag a forearm across his damp brow. "That was a close call. And now I'd better get this crittur out of sight, an' fix myself up just the way Mendoza expects to find me!"

Spike's spur cut the thong which held him to the tree-trunk. But the daring Sheriff's hands were still tied together. How could he deal with the deadly rattlesnake darting towards him?

It was twenty minutes later when the Mexican returned. He looked down into the hollow, and grinned. There was no sign of the snake. Spike Naylor hung from the rawhide thong over the branch—a dead weight.

Getting himself satisfactorily in that position had not been easy for Spike with his bound hands, but he managed it sufficiently well to pass muster. Mendoza was not likely to notice how the long thong had been broken and re-knotted!

And Mendoza did not notice! He strolled forward drew his knife, and reached up to cut down the limp figure. As the knife sheared through the thong, that dangling figure came to life! His bound hands jerked down and snatched a revolver from Mendoza's holster in one lightning movement!

"Don't move a finger, Mendoza!" rasped Spike stepping back. "Just drop the knife. Turn your back, and walk forward three paces—keepin' your hands high! That's fine!"

As the stunned Mexican obeyed, Spike knelt and grasped the knife. He wedged the handle between his knees, and less than a minute later he had cut himself free.

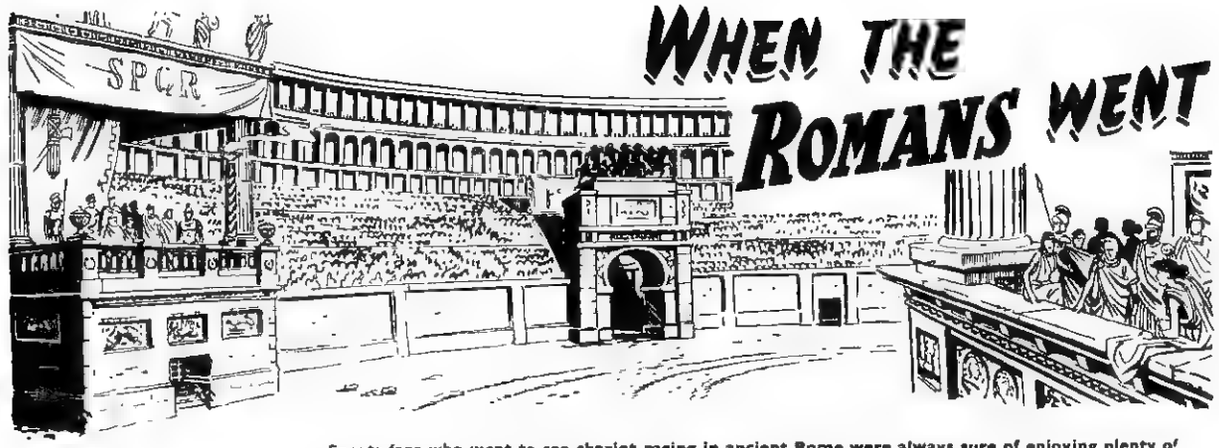
"Reckon you didn't plan quite as well as you thought," said Spike softly. "And now we'll get moving, Mendoza—back to Cordite!"

Later that day, in the Sheriff's office, a group of ranchers and businessmen listened in amazement to Spike's story. Their amazement turned to delight when he began to distribute wads of dollars which they had paid to Mendoza.

"Creepin' coyotes!" gasped saloon-keeper Hank Wyman. "So *you* were that masked man who held me up. An' you did it just so's you could find out why us folk was actin' queer towards you! I never heard tell of a Sheriff turnin' bandit for the sake o' law an' order before."

"Maybe not!" chuckled Spike. "But when it comes to straightenin' things out for folks as dumb as you fellers, a Sheriff's gotta be ready to try anythin'!"

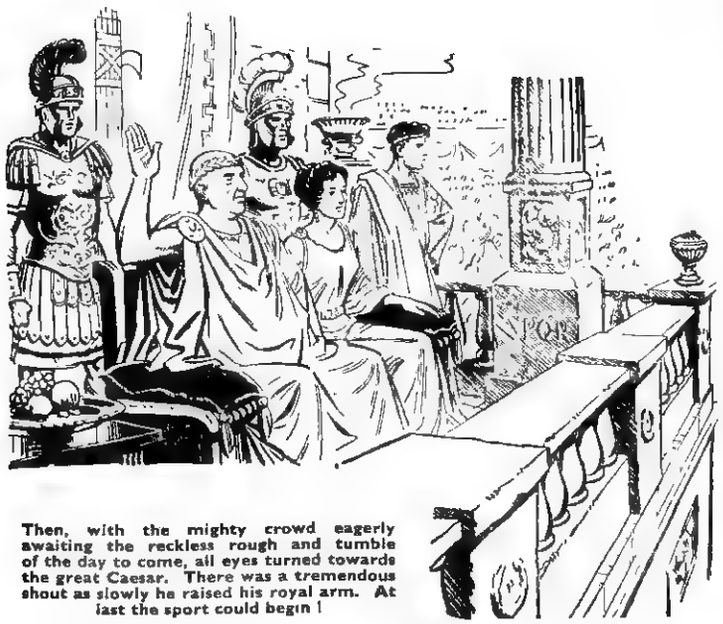
WHEN THE ROMANS WENT



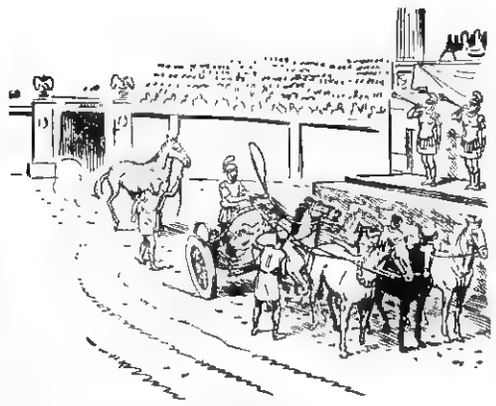
Sports fans who went to see chariot racing in ancient Rome were always sure of enjoying plenty of thrills and spills. With its tier upon tier of solid stone seats, the Circus Maximus could hold over 385,000 cheering citizens. Contests started in a whirlwind of chariot wheels at dawn, and they continued until the sun went down.

Although horses provided the power to pull the chariots, there weren t any jockeys. But in between races, horsemen astonished the spectators with feats of amazing acrobatic trick riding.

There was always a solemn procession before the races began. Idols were borne by priests before the Emperor for his blessing. These were closely followed by high-ranking Senators and the sons of nobles.



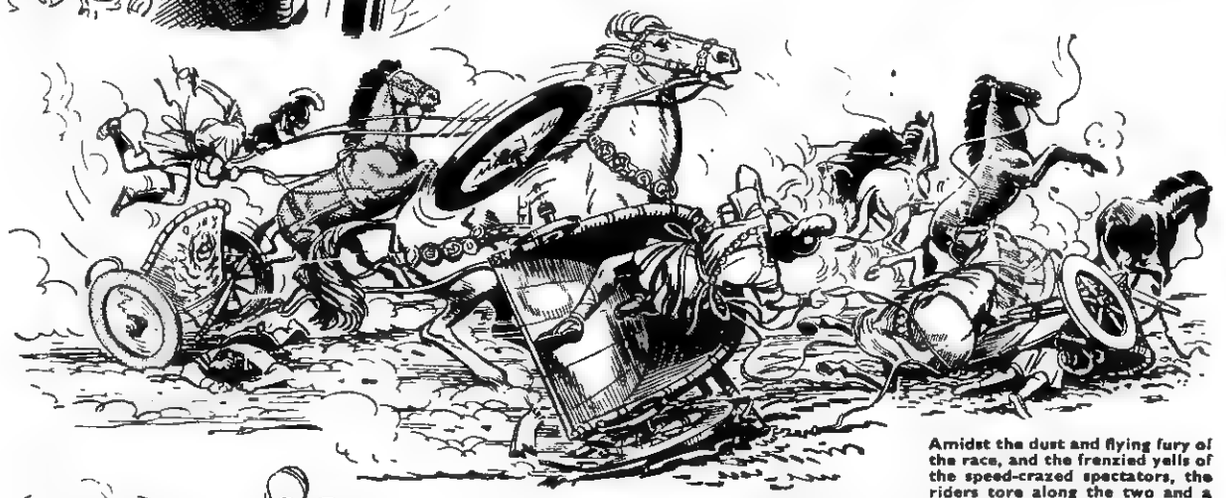
Then, with the mighty crowd eagerly awaiting the reckless rough and tumble of the day to come, all eyes turned towards the great Caesar. There was a tremendous shout as slowly he raised his royal arm. At last the sport could begin !



The drivers, wearing their masters' colours, now prepared for the races. Their golden helmets glinted in the early sun as a fanfare of silver trumpets announced the first contest.

CHARIOT RACING

Soon they were off ! Each chariot was drawn by eight or ten horses, with often as many as twenty teams on the track at once. The reins of all the horses except those of the two nearest to the chariot were lashed around the driver's waist. He could not, therefore, drop them accidentally.



Amidst the dust and flying fury of the race, and the frenzied yells of the speed-crazed spectators, the riders tore along the two and a half mile course—with fourteen chariot-rocking bends to take at reckless speed. In this hectic battle for honour—and survival—a driver's first crash was almost certainly his last.

In the event of having to " bale out," the only link with life for these two-wheel test pilots was a dagger worn at the waist. When a stricken chariot began to topple, a quick-thinking driver could cut the reins, and leap away from a fearful fate beneath the relentless wheels and hooves behind.

Bets and bookmakers abounded in those days. And all the latest racing results were even " broadcast " to outside backers by carrier pigeon—making it a real Roman holiday, even for thousands who couldn't get into the circus!

MYSTERY HOUSE IN NO-MAN'S-LAND

BY CLIFF HOOPER

MIDWAY BETWEEN THE BRITISH AND GERMAN FRONT LINES DURING THE WAR IN ITALY THERE STOOD A STONE COTTAGE, BATTERED BY SHELL-FIRE. THIS COTTAGE IN NO-MAN'S-LAND WAS A MENACE TO THE BRITISH TROOPS, FOR IT COULD BE USED BY ENEMY SNIPERS. SO A SMALL PATROL OF THE GRANT-SHIRE REGIMENT STEALTHILY CREPT TO THE HOUSE TO BLOW IT UP

WATCHING FROM THE RUINS OF A FARM, No. 9 PLATOON COMMANDER SAW HIS MEN CREEP INTO THE COTTAGE. THEY SHOULD HAVE COME OUT AGAIN WITHIN A FEW MINUTES. YET NOT ONE MAN APPEARED EVEN AFTER HALF AN HOUR!
WHAT IN THUNDER HAS HAPPENED TO THAT PATROL? THEY SHOULD HAVE BLOWN UP THE COTTAGE AND GOT BACK HERE BY NOW. I DON'T LIKE IT

THE PLATOON COMMANDER SENT FOR JOE DALE AND SHORTY BROWN, TWO OF HIS BEST MEN
THERE'S SOMETHING VERY QUEER GOING ON AT THE COTTAGE OVER THERE. I'M SENDING ANOTHER DEMOLITION PARTY OUT, AND I WANT YOU TO FOLLOW CLOSE BEHIND THEM AND KEEP THEM COVERED!
VERY GOOD, SIR

WITH EVERY NERVE ALERT, JOE AND SHORTY TRAILED THE SECOND PARTY
WE'RE GETTING NEAR THE COTTAGE, SHORTY. WE'LL TAKE UP POSITIONS BY THAT BIG TREE
OKAY, PAL. THEN IF ANY JERRIES ATTACK OUR CHAPS WE CAN BUTT IN

EVERYTHING SEEMS QUIET. NOT A SIGN OF LIFE FROM THE COTTAGE
IF THERE'D BEEN ANY GERMANS IN THERE, THEY'D HAVE OPENED FIRE BY NOW

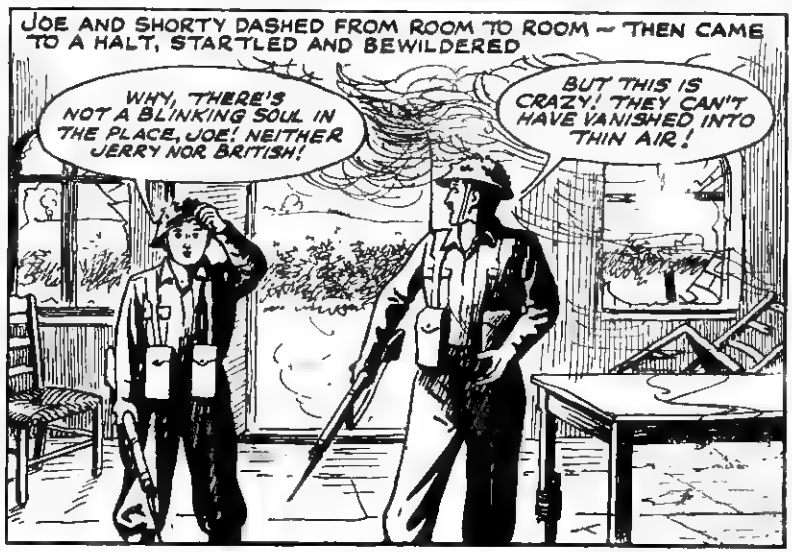
THE PATROL VANISHED INTO THE COTTAGE. THEN CAME A SUDDEN, MUFFLED YELL!
LISTEN, JOE! DID YOU HEAR THAT?
AAGH! HELP! HELP!

THE TWO PALS SPRANG FROM COVER
THERE MUST BE JERRIES IN THERE AFTER ALL! THEY'VE GRABBED OUR CHAPS. COME ON, SHORTY, WE'VE GOT TO RESCUE OUR BLOKES, AND SEE THAT THE COTTAGE IS BLOWN UP

AS THEY RACED NEARER, JOE HURLED A BAKELITE BLAST-GRENADE THROUGH A DOWNSTAIRS WINDOW
IT WON'T DO ANY DAMAGE, BUT IT'LL KEEP THE GERMANS' HEADS DOWN WHILE WE RUSH THE DOOR

THE CHUMS FLATTENED AGAINST THE WALL FOR A SECOND WHILE THE GRENADE EXPLODED
NOW FOR IT! LET'S GO GET 'EM, SHORTY!

JOE KICKED THE DOOR OPEN AND THE PALS SPRANG IN, RIFLES AND BAYONETS AT THE READY


JOE AND SHORTY DASHED FROM ROOM TO ROOM — THEN CAME TO A HALT, STARTLED AND BEWILDERED
WHY, THERE'S NOT A BLINKING SOUL IN THE PLACE, JOE! NEITHER JERRY NOR BRITISH!
BUT THIS IS CRAZY! THEY CAN'T HAVE VANISHED INTO THIN AIR!

FROM AN UPSTAIRS ROOM THE CHUMS PEERED OUT TOWARDS THE ENEMY LINES
NOT A SIGN OF LIFE IN THE HOUSE OR OUTSIDE, JOE. BOTH OUR PARTIES HAVE VANISHED LIKE MAGIC!
IT'S—IT'S SIMPLY UNCANNY. WHAT THE DEUCE CAN HAVE HAPPENED TO 'EM?
THE TWO PALS DESCENDED THE STAIRS
OUR BLOKES MUST BE THE VICTIMS OF SOME GERMAN TRICK, SHORTY. WE'LL LAY AN AMBUSH. GRAB SOME HANDFULS OF THAT FLOUR, AND SPRINKLE IT ABOUT THE FLOOR. I'M GOING TO RIG UP A BOOBY-TRAP WITH THIS SMOKE-GRENADE
AS SOON AS THIS IS READY WE'LL NIP OUTSIDE AND LIE DOGGO. THEN IF ANY GERMANS TOUCH THIS TRIP-WIRE, THE SMOKE-GRENADE WILL GO OFF AND GIVE US WARNING
AND SHOULD THEY DODGE INTO HIDING AGAIN THE FLOUR WILL SHOW UP THEIR FOOTSTEPS... A GOOD IDEA, JOE
THE CHUMS COMPLETED THEIR BOOBY-TRAP, THEN CREPT FROM THE COTTAGE TO A NEARBY SHELL-HOLE TO AWAIT EVENTS. IF THEIR TRICK WORKED, THEY SHOULD SOON LEARN THE STRANGE SECRET OF THE COTTAGE IN NO-MAN'S-LAND
EAGERLY THEY CROUCHED IN THE SHELL-HOLE, WATCHING THE SILENT COTTAGE. SUDDENLY, WHITE SMOKE BURST FROM THE WINDOWS!
IT'S WORKED, SHORTY! COME ON!
INSIDE THE SMOKE-FILLED COTTAGE, STARTLED GERMANS RETREATED IN CONFUSION
ACHTUNG! IT'S A TRICK BY THE BRITISH! THEY MUST BE HERE SOMEWHERE. BACK THE WAY WE CAME! SWIFTLY, MEN!

A FEW SECONDS LATER, THE TWO CHUMS BURST INTO THE COTTAGE

NOW TO ROUND 'EM UP AND FIND OUT WHAT'S BEEN GOING ON!

THROUGH THE THINNING SMOKE A LONE GERMAN DASHED DOWNSTAIRS

ACH! WAIT FOR ME, SERGEANT!

HERE'S ONE OF THEM, SHORTY. I'LL TACKLE HIM. YOU GO FIND THE REST

TAKE THAT, YOU SQUAREHEAD!

SHORTY SEARCHED THE HOUSE—BUT IN VAIN. NOT ANOTHER SOUL WAS TO BE SEEN! MYSTIFIED, JOE QUESTIONED THE GERMAN HE HAD FELLED

WHERE ARE YOUR COMPANIONS, AND THE CAPTURED ENGLANDERS? HOW DID THEY GET OUT OF THIS COTTAGE? SPEAK UP—QUICK!

FIND OUT—IF YOU CAN! I DO NOT TALK!

JOE LOOKED ABOUT HIM AS THE SMOKE CLEARED. THEN HE SAW FOOTSTEPS IN THE FLOUR THAT SHORTY HAD SPRINKLED ON THE FLOOR. HIS PLAN HAD WORKED! THEY WERE THE FOOTMARKS OF THE ENEMY PARTY WHO HAD DISAPPEARED AGAIN SO MYSTERIOUSLY—THE VITAL FOOTMARKS THAT SHOULD REVEAL THE SECRET OF THE MYSTERY COTTAGE

GRASPING HIS RIFLE AND BAYONET FIRMLY, JOE MOVED ACROSS THE ROOM TOWARDS AN INNER DOOR

THESE FOOTMARKS ALL LEAD INTO THE NEXT ROOM. THE ENEMY PARTY MUST HAVE GONE THAT WAY. NOW WE'LL FIND WHERE THEY VANISHED TO...

GET MOVING, FRITZ, AND KEEP YOUR HANDS UP. LET'S ALL TAKE A LOOK IN THERE

THE PALS STEPPED EAGERLY INTO THE NEXT ROOM, THEN STOPPED IN CONSTERNATION
WELL, WHAT DO YOU KNOW! THE FOOTMARKS ALL LEAD TO THE FIREPLACE! DON'T TELL ME THOSE JERRIES ESCAPED UP THE BLINKING CHIMNEY
NO — THEY COULDN'T HAVE GONE UP THERE. THE CHIMNEY IS MUCH TOO NARROW. WE ARE NO NEARER SOLVING THE MYSTERY, SHORTY
IT SEEMS WE'RE BEATEN, JOE
I'M NOT SO SURE. WE'LL TAKE THIS SQUAREHEAD UPSTAIRS TO THAT ROOM WITH THE HOLE IN THE WALL. I'VE GOT AN IDEA
AS THEY MOUNTED THE STAIRS, JOE PULLED A TORCH FROM HIS POCKET
PUT HIM BY THAT HOLE OVERLOOKING THE GERMAN LINES. THEN ROPE HIS HANDS AND FEET, AND LEAVE THE REST TO ME
WHILE SHORTY TIED UP THE GERMAN, JOE QUIETLY SLIPPED THE TORCH TO THE FLOOR
IF THIS TRICK WORKS WE MAY SOLVE THE MYSTERY AFTER ALL
JOE TURNED AND SPOKE IN GERMAN BEFORE HE LEFT THE ROOM
THIS COTTAGE IS GOING TO BE BLOWN SKY-HIGH. YOUR FRIENDS WILL GET A SURPRISE NEXT TIME THEY ARRIVE, FRITZ

THE CHUMS PRETENDED TO DESCEND THE STAIRS — THEN CREPT BACK TO PEER INTO THE ROOM

HE'S GOT YOUR TORCH, JOE! HE'S SIGNALLING THE GERMAN LINES!

THAT'S OKAY, SHORTY. IT'S JUST WHAT I HOPED HE'D DO. HE'S CALLING HIS PALS, AND THIS TIME WE'LL BE READY FOR 'EM!

JOE AND SHORTY MOVED STEALTHILY AWAY, LEAVING THEIR PRISONER TO CONTINUE HIS SIGNALLING. THEY STOLE INTO THE ROOM TO WHICH THE FOOTSTEPS HAD LED. THERE THE TWO PALS CREPT INTO HIDING BEHIND AN OLD SOFA

IT SHOULDN'T BE LONG NOW, SHORTY

YOU'RE RIGHT, JOE! LOOK OVER THERE!

ON THE FAR SIDE OF THE ROOM, THE WHOLE FIREPLACE SWUNG OPEN ON HINGES, TO REVEAL A DARK CAVITY. FROM IT STEPPED ARMED GERMAN TROOPS!

SO THAT'S HOW THEY WERE ABLE TO APPEAR AND DISAPPEAR SO QUICKLY!

AT LAST THE SECRET OF THE MYSTERY COTTAGE WAS REVEALED! THE CHUMS KNEW NOW THAT BEHIND THE FIREPLACE RAN A SECRET TUNNEL, WHICH PROBABLY LED ALL THE WAY TO THE GERMAN LINES THE TWO MISSING PATROLS FROM 9 PLATOON MUST HAVE BEEN SEIZED AND TAKEN ALONG IT TO CAPTIVITY. JOE AND SHORTY TENSED THEMSELVES FOR ACTION. THEN JOE GAVE THE WORD

LEAPING FROM COVER, THE PALS TOOK THE ENEMY COMPLETELY BY SURPRISE

HANDS UP! AND DROP THOSE GUNS!.

THUNDER AND LIGHTNING! IT IS A TRAP!

THEN JOE SPRANG TO THE OPENING OF THE SECRET TUNNEL
KEEP THOSE SQUAREHEADS COVERED, SHORTY. I'M GOING TO TAKE A LOOK DOWN HERE
SURE, JOE, BUT WATCH YOUR STEP
JUST INSIDE THE GLOOMY TUNNEL, JOE FOUND A NUMBER OF BRITISH SOLDIERS, ALL SECURELY BOUND!
GREAT SNAKES! OUR MISSING PATROLS! I'LL CUT YOU LOOSE IN A JIFFY, BOYS
THE RELEASED TOMMIES PRESSED GRATEFULLY AROUND JOE
THANK GOODNESS YOU SHOWED UP, JOE. BUT WE'RE SUNK FOR BLOWING UP THE COTTAGE NOW. THE JERRIES TOOK ALL OUR DEMOLITION OUTFITS
NEVER MIND ABOUT THAT, DAVE. I WANT YOU BOYS TO ESCORT THAT BUNCH OF SQUAREHEADS BACK TO OUR LINES. THERE'S SOMETHING BIG GOING ON HERE, AND SHORTY AND I ARE GOING TO FIND OUT WHAT IT IS
WHILE THE OTHERS SET OFF FOR THE BRITISH LINES WITH THEIR PRISONERS, SHORTY JOINED HIS PAL
OUR NEXT MOVE IS TO EXPLORE THIS TUNNEL, SHORTY, BUT BE READY FOR TROUBLE. THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT WE'LL RUN INTO!
THEY DISCOVERED NOTHING, HOWEVER, UNTIL THEY NEARED THE OTHER END OF THE TUNNEL. THEN—
THIS MUST BE THE DEMOLITION STUFF THAT THE JERRIES TOOK FROM OUR BOYS
GOOD. WE'LL TAKE IT BACK WITH US. BUT FIRST WE'LL HAVE A LOOK OUT OF THAT TUNNEL OPENING
GOSH! THIS MUST BE THE REAR OF THE HILLSIDE, JOE, BEHIND THE GERMAN LINES. SEE THAT MOB OF JERRIES DOWN THERE?
SH! I WANT TO LISTEN, SHORTY!

BELOW THEM, ON PARADE, STOOD A GERMAN COMPANY IN FIGHTING KIT! JOE LISTENED TENSELY AS THE COMPANY COMMANDER RASPED ORDERS TO HIS MEN

WHEN WE REACH THE END OF THE TUNNEL, WE WILL BE WITHIN EASY STRIKING-DISTANCE OF THE BRITISH LINES. FROM THE OLD COTTAGE WE WILL SWOOP TO THE ATTACK AND TAKE THE ENEMY BY SURPRISE. WE WILL SMASH A GAP IN THE ENEMY LINES BEFORE THEY KNOW WHAT HAS HIT THEM

CAN YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT HE'S SAYING, JOE?

YES. THEY'RE GOING TO MAKE AN ATTACK ON OUR LINES THROUGH THIS TUNNEL! SO THAT'S THEIR BIG PLAN. WE'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT, SHORTY — AND WE'VE GOT TO ACT FAST

IN A FLASH JOE SNATCHED UP THE DEMOLITION CHARGES

I'LL RAM SOME OF THIS EXPLOSIVE INTO THE TUNNEL WALL. GRAB THE PLUNGER AND BE READY TO GET GOING AS SOON AS I'VE CONNECTED THESE WIRES

THE PALS MOVED OFF ALONG THE TUNNEL, PAYING OUT THE WIRE AS THEY WENT

WE'LL LET THE JERRIES COME ON. AS SOON AS THEY'RE ALL INSIDE THE TUNNEL, WE'LL BLOW IT UP BEHIND THEM, AND BOTTLE THEM IN!

HERE THEY COME NOW, JOE!

AT THE WIDE-OPEN FIREPLACE OF THE MYSTERY COTTAGE, THE TWO CHUMS HALTED AND CROUCHED DOWN, READY FOR ACTION. SOON THE TRAMP OF HEAVY JACKBOOTS SOUNDED IN THE TUNNEL. JOE WAITED UNTIL THE GERMANS DREW NEARER. THEN HE SLAMMED DOWN THE PLUNGER HANDLE

WITH A DEAFENING ROAR THE CHARGES EXPLODED AND THE TUNNEL COLLAPSED BEHIND THE ADVANCING GERMANS

ACH! AN EXPLOSION! WE'RE CUT OFF, HERR CAPTAIN

BUT THE WAY AHEAD IS STILL OPEN. FOLLOW ME, MEN, TO THE ATTACK!

INSIDE THE COTTAGE, SHORTY PRESSED HIS WEIGHT AGAINST THE HINGED FIREPLACE
ONCE WE'VE SHUT THIS, JOE, WE'LL HAVE THE JERRIES TRAPPED... GOSH--I CAN'T MOVE IT! IT MUST BE OPERATED BY A SECRET LEVER!
THEN CUT ACROSS TO OUR LINES AND FETCH THE PLATOON ALONG. I'LL STAY HERE AND TRY TO HOLD BACK THE JERRIES. BUT RUN, SHORTY, FOR PETE'S SAKE! HURRY!
CROUCHED IN THE OPEN ENTRANCE, JOE FOUGHT IT OUT WITH THE ATTACKING GERMANS
BACK, YOU BLINKIN' SQUAREHEADS!
MEANWHILE, SHORTY WAS DASHING UP TO THE BRITISH LINES
WHERE'S THE SKIPPER? I WANT HIM! QUICK!
SHORTY GASPED OUT HIS NEWS TO THE PLATOON COMMANDER. WITHIN A MINUTE, 9 PLATOON WERE CHARGING ACROSS NO-MAN'S-LAND
IT'LL BE A CLOSE THING, SIR! JOE'S HOLDING THEM SINGLE-HANDED. HE CAN'T KEEP THEM BACK FOR LONG
AND WHEN AT LAST THE GERMAN TROOPS DID BREAK THROUGH INTO THE COTTAGE, THEY RAN STRAIGHT INTO AN AMBUSH!
HANDS UP, THE LOT OF YOU! YOU ARE OUR PRISONERS
THE PLATOON COMMANDER AND THE TWO PALS WERE THE LAST TO LEAVE. AND BEHIND THEM THE MYSTERY COTTAGE WAS BLASTED SKYWARDS BY AN EXPLOSIVE PLANTED BY JOE AND SHORTY
THAT PLACE WON'T GIVE ANY MORE TROUBLE, SIR
AND A GOOD JOB, TOO! I'LL SEE THAT YOU AND SHORTY BROWN GET SPECIAL LEAVE FOR THIS
THE END.

The HAUNTED LAGOON

By Michael Alan

THE JU-JU OF THE LAKE

KAIBU, son of Chief Minza of Sambra Island, hummed happily. His cheerful young face was alight with the pleasure of his task. Above him the palm trees of the South Sea island waved in the warm breeze.

"Soon I shall finish my new canoe," he called to his father. The old Chief was proudly watching the skill of his son's work.

"It will be the finest canoe in the island of Sambra," Chief Minza smiled.

Kaibu grinned up at the old man. Then his grin changed to a frown.

Nurd, the island witch-doctor, was approaching. His head was hidden under a huge and hideous mask. At his waist dangled the skulls of many monkeys. His bare legs and arms were painted in vivid colours.

The witch-doctor halted before the aged Chief. He raised a thin, scrawny arm. Then pointing at Kaibu's canoe he rasped:

"I forbid the Chief's son to complete the new canoe!"

Kaibu straightened up, staring with startled eyes at the witch-doctor. Quickly his look changed to indignation. Chief Minza spoke before his son could utter a protest. Nurd must not be angered. His evil witchcraft was great and terrible.

"My son wishes only to make a faster canoe to catch more fish," he anxiously explained.

Nurd whirled, glaring at Kaibu.

"I say that Kaibu shall not fish in the lagoon of Sambra," he snarled. "Kaibu has defied the Gods. I commanded him not to cut a tree from the slopes of the Forbidden Mountain!"

Kaibu turned to his father, anger showing clearly on his usually cheerful face.

"Father, my old canoe is sluggish and unsafe. Where else can I find a tree from which to shape a new canoe except on the Forbidden Mountain? I did no harm. I cut only one tree." He pointed to the trunk from which he was making his new canoe.

Minza nodded.

"That is true, O Nurd. My son speaks the truth."

Nurd's voice rose to a scream. He danced with rage. The islanders who had gathered close fell back in fear. The witch-doctor's fury was terrible.

Kaibu the Warrior at Grips with a Strange South Sea Island Riddle

" I warned Kaibu that I spoke for the Gods. No man must set foot on the Forbidden Mountain. Kaibu has disobeyed—he must be punished."

He paused, crouching and waving a crudely-painted stick. Slowly his finger swept round the circle of islanders. They cringed back in terror.

" Let no man fish on the lagoon of Sambra," the evil witch-doctor shrieked. " So shall you all be punished because of Kaibu."

Kaibu's eyes flashed with anger as he faced the witch-doctor. Yet his heart trembled, for he had seen the evil magic which Nurd could produce.

" Why should others be punished if it is I alone who have done wrong? " he demanded. " And what wrong is there in cutting down a single tree on the Forbidden Mountain? "

Nurd whirled. He spat on the sand at Kaibu's feet.

" You dog," he snarled. " You have defied the Gods. They have sent a spirit into the lagoon. The spirit forbids any man to fish. So what good is your new canoe, Kaibu? " His voice rose to a terrible shriek. " The lagoon is haunted. Before the sun sleeps the spirit shall speak—and if after that any man dares to fish in the lagoon he shall die."

He gave a horrible, cackling laugh. His listeners shuddered. Kaibu stared at him with hate and loathing, yet with a feeling of dread. He steeled himself to answer.

" What proof is there that the Gods are angry? " He drew himself proudly to his full height, gazing down at the crouching figure of the witch-doctor. His pulse quickened as he stared defiantly at Nurd.

Nurd sneered and then hissed like a venomous snake.

" Tonight before the sun sets the spirit of the lake will give its sign. The waters of the lake will turn from blue to red, and then the air will be filled with a wailing as the fish depart forever! "

He turned and sped away as fast as his legs would carry him.

Kaibu's fists clenched. How he would like to toss the evil witch-doctor into the lagoon. He looked at his aged father and saw with sorrow the anxious expression on his face.

" I am sorry, my father, that I have brought this trouble to the heads of you and your people. But I do not believe Nurd . . ."

" Hush, my son," Chief Minza begged in a trembling voice. " Have you not already done enough harm? Nurd's power is terrible. I fear for my people. They will starve unless he removes his taboo and lets us once again fish in the lagoon. Only he has power over the spirits of the lake."

" Yes, we shall starve," an islander cried accusingly. " It is because of Kaibu."

He turned and stared at them pityingly.

" Nurd has frightened us all our lives," he cried.

Then he halted in a frozen silence, staring with unbelieving eyes at the centre of the lagoon. The islanders followed his gaze. A gasp of horror left them.

Slowly the blue water of the calm lagoon was strangely changing.

From its centre, in an ever-widening circle, the lagoon's clear colour was altering. Slowly it spread, until almost the whole surface was changed to a blood-like red.

Suddenly, the peaceful sunlit air was seemingly split asunder.

WHEE—ooh—h! WHOO—eeh—h!

The terrifying wail shrieked above the heads of the petrified natives. Skirling and howling it whistled over the lagoon, from reef to shore, through the palm trees—and back again. From whence it came, none could tell. Echoing and screaming, it rose to a terrible pitch. Then, as suddenly as it had come, it stopped.

A clamour of frightened voices rose. The islanders shouted in fear.

" The lagoon is haunted—the fish are departing," they screamed.

And like one man they turned and fled to their huts where they hid, shivering with fright.

Kaibu, his pulses hammering, held his ground. He stared at the blood-red lagoon with astonished eyes, watching the reddened water as it gently lapped the shore. In the silence which followed the awful wailing he could hear his heart pounding.

Minza, his voice trembling, called to his son.

" Kaibu, the spirits are indeed terribly angry. The witch-doctor must be obeyed. You must not finish your new canoe. My people can never again fish in the lagoon."

Kaibu looked around him. From every hut terror-struck faces peered out, staring at the lagoon. Gradually, one by one, the islanders crept forth and surrounded the Chief and his son.

" The lagoon is haunted."

" We shall starve."

" Chief Minza, beseech Nurd to remove his taboo. Beg him to undo his mighty anger with us."

Kaibu stared in alarm at the islanders. Never before had he seen them so scared. Nurd's witch-craft had got them in his power. No longer was his father, the Chief, in control. The witch-doctor now ruled the island. And his rule would be evil.

There was only one way to overcome the desperate situation. He, Kaibu, would prove that the lagoon was not haunted! Unless he did so, the people would starve. Nurd would enforce his cruel power ruthlessly. Only when the islanders had been reduced to utter misery and were completely under his power would he relent. Only then would Nurd permit them to again fish in the lagoon.

Determined to expose the witch-doctor's trickery,

Kaibu glanced again at the lagoon. His pulse quickened as he stared at its red colour, which was now gradually lessening. He could not repress a shudder. Was the lagoon haunted? With an effort he thrust the thought aside. It was a trick of Nurd's. He was sure of it. But could he prove it? He turned and strode away, and the islanders stared after him as he disappeared into the jungle.

Kaibu thrust his way through the tall grass. At last he came to a clearing and halted, listening. None had dared to follow him. The islanders were too scared to leave the village. He smiled with grim satisfaction. Into his head had come a desperate plan to prove that the witch-doctor was a trickster.

ATTACKED BY A CHEETAH

AHEAD, beyond the long grass and shoulder-high greenery, lay the Forbidden Mountain. Once before Kaibu had ventured to its foot. Then, he had dared to cut down the tree for his dug-out canoe—which now lay unfinished on the shore of the "haunted" lagoon.

He stooped, closely examining the ground. He nodded. Yes, there were the footprints for which he searched. Nurd's! The witch-doctor had dared approach the Forbidden Mountain. Somewhere on its mysterious slopes he had his lair.

Kaibu was a born hunter. He moved so silently that not even the birds took notice of his passing. Swiftly he crept through the jungle grass. The witch-doctor must not know he was breaking the island taboo—that he was daring to climb the Forbidden Mountain.

He froze. Above him a sudden, chattering shriek broke out. Stealthily he glanced upward. A monkey, high in the branches of a tree, was gazing down at him. In the silence the little animal's alarm call carried far.

High up the mountain the witch-doctor paused. He was about to enter the mouth of a dark, mysterious cave. Its entrance was cunningly hidden by a curtain of wild vines. No man, other than Nurd, had ever entered it. This was his secret lair.

Nurd listened, straining his ears. Into his wicked eyes came an angry expression. The monkey's warning told him danger was near.

Suddenly the witch-doctor whistled softly. From the cave there came a low-pitched growl. Into the open stalked a sleek cat-like animal. Its yellow eyes glowed balefully. Powerful muscles rippled silkily as it walked.

"My beautiful cheetah," Nurd purred. He pointed down the Mountain in the direction of the monkey's chattering warning. "Go! Find who dares break Nurd's taboo. And kill him."

In a moment the cheetah had vanished. It moved at an incredible speed down the mountainside.

Unaware of the terrible peril approaching, Kaibu continued his silent climb. Once he glanced back and glimpsed the lagoon through the foliage. It lay far behind, its colour now restored to a peaceful blue. Not a canoe disturbed the calm surface of the haunted lagoon; no one had dared to break the curse Nurd placed upon them.

The cheetah halted, sniffing. It smelt man. It stiffened and its teeth bared in wicked hate.

Like a furry flash, the savage cheetah sprang from the tree. Kaibu flung himself to one side, little realising that the animal had been sent to stop him reaching the Forbidden Mountain.

Swiftly it climbed a tree, and, crouching low, hid among the branches, awaiting its prey.

Below, the scrub slowly parted as Kaibu crept forth.

With a growl, the cheetah sprang from the tree. Kaibu, taken off his guard, threw himself sideways. A flash of rippling fur shot across his vision. Mighty claws and murderous fangs filled the air. Next instant the cheetah was on top of him.

Kaibu went down under the weight of the brute. Flat on his back he fell, the wild beast growling in rage as it leapt again. Its movements were swift, the swish of its claws terrible. Like lightning it clawed. Kaibu felt a searing pain as his shoulder was ripped.

For a moment he was helpless beneath the terrible attack. Then his right hand found his razor-sharp hunting knife. The beast was now astride him, its yellow fangs seeking to tear at his throat. Kaibu thrust his left arm upwards. His strong fingers closed on the brute's lower jaw. Desperately he tried to force it shut.

The cheetah snarled and slashed at him with its hind foot.

Knife in hand, Kaibu hung desperately to the cheetah's jaw. Exerting all his strength, he twisted his arm. With a snarl of pain the beast was forced on its side, claws flashing. Kaibu felt a burning stab as it ripped his muscles.

He lifted his knife arm. Then, with every ounce of his failing strength, he stabbed for its heart. For a terrible instant the cheetah's steel-like muscles strained and its talons ripped at Kaibu. Then—it was dead.

Shaking from his ordeal, Kaibu got to his feet. Above him the monkeys and the birds were screeching with excitement. He glanced at his wounds, and bent down, plucking herbal leaves. Swiftly he applied them to his cuts. Their balm instantly eased the burning pains.

High up the Forbidden Mountain the witch-doctor cackled with evil joy. The shrill chattering and birds' shrieks from far down the mountain told him that his cheetah had found its victim. And as the noise gradually died away he nodded with wicked satisfaction, sure his cheetah had done its murderous work.

Kaibu stared down at the dead cheetah. He frowned as he saw a thin, leather collar around its neck. This was no ordinary wild beast. Suddenly he understood. The cheetah had been set on him. There was only one who could have done such a thing—Nurd!

So the witch-doctor knew that Kaibu was on his trail. Somehow the evil Nurd was aware that he had broken the taboo, and had dared to venture up the steep slopes of the Forbidden Mountain. Nurd now guessed that Kaibu was determined to prove his witchcraft was nothing but trickery.

Kaibu thought swiftly. Only by discovering Nurd's hidden lair could he hope to learn the secrets of the witch-doctor's mysterious powers. But now Nurd knew he was near the mountain. And he would be prepared and waiting for him. Kaibu could not repress a slight shiver. Nurd's witchcraft was evil and dangerous.

He must change his tactics. He dare no longer follow the faint tracks to Nurd's secret lair. He must discover another way to find the witch-doctor's hiding place. He turned aside and cautiously made his way towards a swift mountain stream.

Plunging up to his waist, he fought his way upwards against the fast water. Breathing hard from his exertions he climbed and slipped until, after a long while, he came to a plateau more than halfway up the Forbidden Mountain.

He paused to rest. The uncanny silence gripped him. Far, far below he glimpsed wisps of smoke. They were the cooking fires of his father's people. What were they cooking, he wondered? For they would not have dared venture on to the haunted lagoon. They must be baking the few fish which they had stored.

Kaibu looked around. The plateau ended in a sheer drop. He peered over its edge. Below was a massive cliff-face. At its foot lay a broad ledge. He stiffened. His keen eyes had seen something strange.

Forgetting his weariness he cast around for a way down the cliff. There was none. It dropped straight down to the ledge, a hundred feet below.

Suddenly his eyes brightened. He had seen a chance. It was a desperate risk—but he would take it. Hurrying back across the plateau, he drew his sharp knife and began to slash at the wild vines covering the cliff's far side.

Soon he had woven himself a thin, strong rope of vine.

He tied this to a rock hanging over the cliff and began to climb down.

Kaibu felt the vine burning into his palms as he let himself slide. With a shuddering jolt he hit the ledge. He crouched, peering around. He had not been seen. Soon, perhaps, he would know the truth of Nurd's evil magic.

He wasted no time. He hurried across the ledge and stooped down. He had been right. The thing he had seen from above was a trail of footprints. And Kaibu's sharp eyes recognised them. They were those of the witch-doctor, Nurd.

Cautiously but swiftly he followed them. They led along the ledge—then, abruptly, disappeared at the foot of the cliff.

For a moment Kaibu was puzzled. He crept forward. Carefully his hand explored the green vines which covered the cliff face. He almost fell forward. The vines gave under his hand. He

found himself staring into the black, yawning mouth of a deep cavern.

He turned and gazed back over his shoulder. From far down the side of the Forbidden Mountain came cries of anger. It was the voice of Nurd.

Kaibu smiled with grim satisfaction. The witch-doctor had found his man-killing cheetah—dead. Nurd now knew that not every one of the islanders was under his fearful power. One, at least, had defied him!

Treading water, Kaibu held the opened jar above his head. He was about to reveal to his tribe the amazing secret of the haunted lagoon!

KAIBU'S "MAGIC"

KAIBU peered into the forbidding blackness of the cave. Was this the secret lair, the home of Nurd's witchcraft mysteries? Kaibu felt his heart beat faster as he stepped through the curtain of vines and entered the cave.

In complete darkness, using hands and bare feet to feel, he walked on. The cave rapidly narrowed until it was nothing but a tunnel. It led down and down.

Suddenly Kaibu stopped. What was that strange, weird sound? He felt the hair on his scalp tighten. It was like the sighing of a great monster, far below him.

Sh—h—h! Cr—urr!

Kaibu listened, tensed and puzzled. Where was it coming from?

What was it? He moved forward, then stumbled as his bare foot crunched on a sharp stone. The stone fell away, and rolled downward.

Kaibu sucked in his breath. The stone had fallen. From far below there sounded a splash.

He laughed in sudden relief. The strange hissing and sighing was explained. Far down, the sea had found a tunnel which ran under the Forbidden Mountain. It was the swishing back and forth of the sea which caused the strange, weird sound. And again Kaibu laughed, in a loud ringing tone of relief.

Suddenly, splitting the silence of the island, there sounded a weird, awful shriek! Kaibu stiffened. It was the terrifying wail he and the islanders had already heard that day. But this time it was different.

He spun round, almost losing his balance as he did so. Wildly, he clutched at the wall of the narrowed cave, and his hand closed on a stone jar.

Stumbling, he cautiously made his way back to the mouth of the cave. There, in the bright light of day, he looked at the jar. It was corked tightly and was a water jar such as the villagers used. He pulled out the cork, and sniffed. But could smell nothing.

Carefully he tilted the jar. Some of its contents spilled in to his hand. He stared at it fixedly for a moment. They were fine, sharp crystals of a deep, red substance.

Suddenly Kaibu lifted his head and glanced sharply back into the cave. In his eyes was the light of understanding. He recalled that each time those weird wails had sounded. Nurd had not been among the people.

When the witch-doctor had returned to the village, he had come from the direction of the Forbidden Mountain.

Kaibu turned, gathering together a great bundle of brushwood, and he carried it into the cave's narrowed tunnel. Again and again he repeated his journey until he had built an almost solid wall across the tunnel. Then he piled stone and rock until no air could get through to the shaft down which he had accidentally kicked the stone.

Kaibu smiled as he pictured Nurd's rage when

he discovered the stone blocking the entrance.

It would prove to the witch-doctor that no longer could he exercise his trickery. The end of his evil power was in sight!

It was near sunset when Kaibu had finished. He hurried down the hill, back to the village. The people saw him coming and cried out in alarm at sight of him. They feared Nurd's vengeance.

" My father's people," Kaibu called in a loud, commanding voice. " It is the time of the sun's going to sleep. It is the time of testing. Come with me. I go now to vanquish the spirit of the lagoon."

He turned and strode through the village to the lagoon. In his hand he boldly carried the jar of dye crystals which he had found in the cave.

Nurd, the witch-doctor, heard his daring words, and smiled cruelly. Nurd watched Kaibu striding boldly to the shore, then he quietly slipped away to the Forbidden Mountain, towards the cave.

Chief Minza slowly followed to the lagoon. He feared for his son's bravery, knowing that if Kaibu failed there was nothing could save him from Nurd's vengeance. For the witch-doctor's power would then be so great over the islanders that they would do his instant bidding. Even to sacrificing the Chief's son.

On the shore, with the sun rapidly sinking towards the rim of the ocean, Kaibu prepared to take to the water of the haunted lagoon. The people watched him fearfully, with awed admiration.

" My father's people! " he said to them. " I tell you there is no spirit that haunts the lagoon. But you do not believe my words. So now I will show you the truth. And I promise you, no more will you hear the wailing. I will show you the thing which caused the lagoon's pure water to change its colour."

With scarcely a splash he took to the water. Powerfully he swam from the shore. Fascinated, speaking not a word, the crowd of scared islanders watched. In the centre of the lagoon, he turned.

Chief Minza stared, anxiety in his aged eyes. The watchers held their breath in fearful wonderment. Kaibu waved triumphantly. He held aloft his arm. In his hand was grasped the stone jar. He pulled out the cork and spilled the dye crystals into the lagoon.

Instantly, the dye crystals began to turn the water into a deep red colour. It spread as Kaibu swam swiftly back to the shore. He stepped from the lagoon and tossed the empty jar at his father's feet.

" Behold, my father," he cried. " The magic of Nurd." He kicked the jar aside with his naked toe. " A jar of crystals that dyed the water from blue to red."

" But, my son," old Minza cried. " The wailing, the shriek of the spirit—how do you explain that? "

" Do you hear it now, my father? " Kaibu asked.

Minza shook his head. " Nor will you again."

" But—we heard it this afternoon," Minza stammered. " And it was a terrible sound. Like the voice of a great laughing devil."

Kaibu smiled, grimly.

" That was not the voice of a devil," he replied. " Unless you call your son a devil, my father."

" What do you mean? " Minza cried.

The islanders pressed closer.

" That laugh was mine," Kaibu chuckled. " I have discovered the truth of the mystery of the lagoon."

" Tell us what it is," his hearers cried eagerly.

" A deep shaft, up in yonder mountain, which runs through the rock and out to the reef." He pointed across the lagoon. " When a man shouts at the top of the shaft, the sound is carried down it, through the tunnel under the lagoon, to the reef. And it makes the terrible wailing you all heard."

" But—the changing colour of the lagoon? " Minza asked.

" You have seen," and Kaibu pointed to the jar. " Nurd, who made sounds up there, in his cave at the top of the shaft, dropped the red dye crystals down the shaft. And the colouring was carried out into the centre of the lagoon before it found its way to the surface."

" You say we shall never again hear the fearful wailing? " the old Chief asked.

" Aye," Kaibu smiled. " For I have blocked the tunnel with stone. No sound will now get through it. Nurd is not strong enough to take away the stones."

Kaibu looked around at the expressions on the islanders' faces. And suddenly he opened his mouth, threw back his powerful shoulders and roared with laughter. Their expressions of amazement were so comical.

Chief Minza looked proudly at Kaibu.

" My son," he said, laying his arm round Kaibu's broad back. " You are the greatest man on Sambra. No more will we fear Nurd and his witchcraft. Tell me, my son, how shall we punish him? "

Kaibu smiled.

" By laughing at him," he wisely replied.

And up on the hillside, Nurd clenched his hands in rage as he heard the happy laughter from the village below.

No more would the people of Sambra fear the witchcraft of Nurd. His evil power over the Islanders had gone—for ever.

Kaibu turned and strode back to his canoe. With a light heart he picked up his wood-shaping tool. He glanced out over the lagoon where, already, the singing islanders were once again launching their fishing canoes.

Soon Kaibu's new canoe would also be speeding over the peaceful lagoon!

PHIDO, the ELECTRONIC BLOODHOUND

By Victor Norman

WHAT A "SHOCKING DOG"!

PHIDO, the electronic hound, loped along a country lane. Not even the keenest eye could have been certain at a glance whether or not it was a real dog.

Phido had real bloodhound's fur, a heavy jowl, a permanent frown, and as he loped along his head was down as though snuffling the ground.

Fred Forbes, at the other end of the lead, chuckled as passers-by turned now and then, to remark "Grand dog, that."

It would have been a shock for them if they had learned that Phido was merely an automaton—that his eyes were camera lenses, his ears microphones, and that he was, all in all, the most wonderful of modern inventions—an electronic dog.

Admirers would have received a real shock—an electric one—had they patted Phido. Professor Stanton Wyx, Phido's inventor, had arranged that shock to keep people from examining the dog too closely.

Fred, student detective, under tuition from Stanton Wyx, had had Phido placed in his charge, and there was nothing about the marvellous dog that Fred did not know.

Fred and Phido had been given a special job. A few hundred yards away was their destination—the kennels of some racing greyhounds.

"Here we are, Phido old pal," said Fred. He spoke to the dog as though it really understood, and in many ways it could. It listened anyway, and when it was wanted, could record what it heard on magnetic tape and reproduce it later through a loud speaker.

"Now for it," mused Fred. "In we—hullo—"

From the gateway of the kennels strode a man in a dark suit, scarf, and a slouch hat. By the way he walked towards Fred he was on business—and that business was Phido.

"Keep that dog of yours away from these kennels," he rapped to Fred.

Fred halted. "He's quite safe," he said.

"My dogs aren't. They'll eat him," retorted the man.

"They'll have a shock if they try," Fred chuckled.

The man glared. He was, Fred could see, ill-tempered and impatient.

"Listen, son," he said, "if you know what's good for you and your dog, you'll keep away."

"I'm taking him on the heath," said Fred.

"Not while my dogs are training."

"Why, do you own the heath?" asked Fred in surprise. "I thought it was public property."

The man was staring at Phido, and Fred realised that he had noticed something unusual about the dog.

"Has that animal got glass eyes?" he demanded.

Fred didn't want Phido to be inspected too closely. He was on the track of some crooks, and it was better that they should think it a real dog. They might guess what it really was if they looked too closely, and there was no guarantee that Stanton Wyx's secret of the electronic bloodhound had not already reached the underworld.

"Glass eyes? No—it's got a glassy stare because it doesn't like the way you speak to me," Fred said, successfully stifling a chuckle.

To add weight to his statement, Fred operated the complex electric cable which acted as and looked like a dog's lead. Phido snarled suddenly, baring his gleaming teeth at the man. Startled, he jumped back.

He Was Only Made of Valves and Tin—But Against Him Crooks Could Never Win!

" I've warned you, anyway," he rapped and hurried back through the gateway, giving Phido an uneasy stare. That snarl from Phido had convinced him that the dog was real enough.

" Good old Phido," Fred smiled. " I'll bet that's one of the gang. You got his photo O.K.? And his voice? "

Although Phido didn't answer, Fred knew the answer, for while the man had been talking, the camera lenses in Phido's eyes had been at work. There was now a first class picture of the man on the film spools and his voice on the recording tape.

" We're going on to the heath, Phido, whether he likes it or not. I may find a way of getting you into the kennels while we're there," said Fred.

It was a tricky game he had to play. Stanton Wyx had ferreted out information that this Kennel was one of the centres of some dog-faking that had troubled the greyhound racing world for the past few weeks. First class dogs were being disguised and run as novices, winning easily but unexpectedly and netting the crooks a lot of money.

But real evidence to convict them was lacking. It was that evidence that Fred and Phido had come to collect.

Controlling the dog's movements by the hand lead, and with a button-type microphone in his coat lapel, Fred took Phido on to the heath. There they found half a dozen splendid greyhounds being prepared for a trial run.

Several of the men holding the dogs on leashes shouted to Fred to keep off, but he took no notice. His job was to get Phido into trouble so that they could be taken to the Boss's office. He meant to leave Phido there and let the electronic bloodhound overhear and record all that was said—on the magnetic recording tape.

But the crooks had their own ideas. From the kennels came three greyhounds, older than the rest, and snarling fiercely. They were held in leash by the man who had spoken to Fred earlier.

" I'm warning you for the last time," he shouted to Fred. " These dogs are killers. If I let them loose—watch out for that poor dog of yours."

Fred stood his ground. He watched as the racing greyhounds were set off over the heath. Then the man who had threatened him gave an order, and slipped the three snarling greyhounds from their leads.

Immediately they made for Phido.

Fred let go of Phido's lead and jumped back, but although he had no physical contact with the wonder dog, it would still obey his orders given through the lapel mike.

" Turn! " Fred commanded. " Snarl! "

The powerful greyhounds, snarling, closed in on Phido. Phido could have run, if Fred ordered it, but the man reckoned that his three greyhounds, even though their racing days were over, could catch him.

But Phido didn't move. He stood there fearlessly. The greyhounds raced towards him not realising that they could have got better results attacking a tank.

WARNING—NEVER FIGHT PHIDO!

THOSE greyhounds didn't bite off more than they could chew—simply because they couldn't bite off anything.

One leaped in and took a bite, but drew back shaking his head as it found something really tough under Phido's fur.

Fred made Phido snarl, but not bite, for he knew how powerful were Phido's jaws—and he had no grudge against the greyhounds, they were only obeying orders.

Another pounced on the electronic bloodhound, trying to bowl him over by sheer weight, but it also bounced off.

The dogs' ferocity was waning. They were puzzled and baffled.

This was something new in dogs—a dog that no teeth could hurt. Their snarling ceased and they backed away respectfully.

The fight was over.

" Quiet, Phido," ordered Fred. Phido became meekly silent and sat down, panting out a cloud of vapour.

" That's certainly some dog," said the crook, who had stayed in the background and watched the fight. He was amazed; he had never seen his dogs beaten so easily before.

" Wait till his owner hears of this," Fred retorted with a show of anger. " That dog's worth a thousand pounds. If your brutes have damaged—I mean—injured him, there'll be trouble . . ."

" He's not hurt? " the man asked uneasily, alarmed at the threat.

" I don't know," retorted Fred," I want to see your Boss and complain about this! "

" The Boss has an important business conference with some blokes from London. He can't see anyone now," snapped the other.

Fred already knew that. It was for that conference that he had come. He wanted Phido present at it, listening and recording all that was said.

He knew he'd have to work quickly, so when the man's attention was distracted by the greyhounds on the other side of the heath, Fred set Phido moving. The dog stood up and ran for the gates that led into the kennels.

The man whirled. " Stop him," he yelled, in alarm, and raced in pursuit.

Fred smiled and ran after him. He directed Phido through the gates and then halted him, for there might be an obstacle in the way.

When Fred caught up with the dog the man was

glaring at Phido at a wary distance. Phido had stopped outside a door marked " Office," and the man was trying to get him away so that he could get in. Fred glanced swiftly through the windows and saw a group of men sitting near a large desk. This must be that important conference, he thought.

Suddenly the door opened and a fat man glared out.

" What's all the row—hey, get back," he yelped as he saw Phido at his feet. But Phido darted clean through his legs and into the office.

There were four men in the office—tough types, Fred judged with a swift glance. The air was thick with cigar smoke, and they were all staring at Phido who had sat down in a corner.

Fred turned to the fat man.

" You set your dogs on my Phido," he flared. " He's worth a lot of money. If he's hurt, it'll cost *you* a lot."

Without being noticed, Fred switched off Phido's control.

Thud! The dog collapsed in the corner.

Fred jumped forward in faked alarm. He listened to Phido's chest and heard, as he expected, a faint whirr, barely detectable through the sound-proof inner coat. Then he set in motion a tick-tocking heart beat which caused Phido's flanks to heave as though he were really breathing.

"A vet—I must get a vet at once," Fred cried, " Give me a rug . . ."

He seized an overcoat and flung it over Phido; then ignoring the startled men's protests, he ran for the door repeating that he must get a vet.

" But while I'm gone, don't touch him," Fred warned them. " He has jaws of steel. Leave him alone and he'll leave you alone. But he may have a fit if he's disturbed, and may bite you."

Fred grabbed a bike and cycled off hastily. He had switched on the recording tape when he was examining Phido, and knew that the men would be too scared to touch the apparently ill dog until he got back. None of them wanted to pay damages for injuring a thousand pound show dog—and none of them wanted to test Fred's claim that Phido might bite them if provoked.

Fred cycled away down the lane to where he had noticed a telephone box. He put through a call to Stanton Wyx, who was waiting for Fred's message.

" All gone according to plan, sir," said Fred excitedly.

" Well, done," said the professor-detective. " Leave Phido there for about half an hour. Wait for me where we arranged, Fred and we'll drive up there and you introduce me as the vet. We can take him away in the car then."

Right on time, Stanton Wyx drove up in his powerful sports car. There was nothing of the absent-minded professor about him. He was keen-eyed and alert.

" Step in, Fred," he said, briskly. " Now remember, I'm the vet."

A few minutes later the car swept through the gates of the Kennels. Fred led the way to the Boss's office, and rapped on the door.

It was locked, and Fred peered through a window but could see no-one. Suddenly he whirled as someone said:

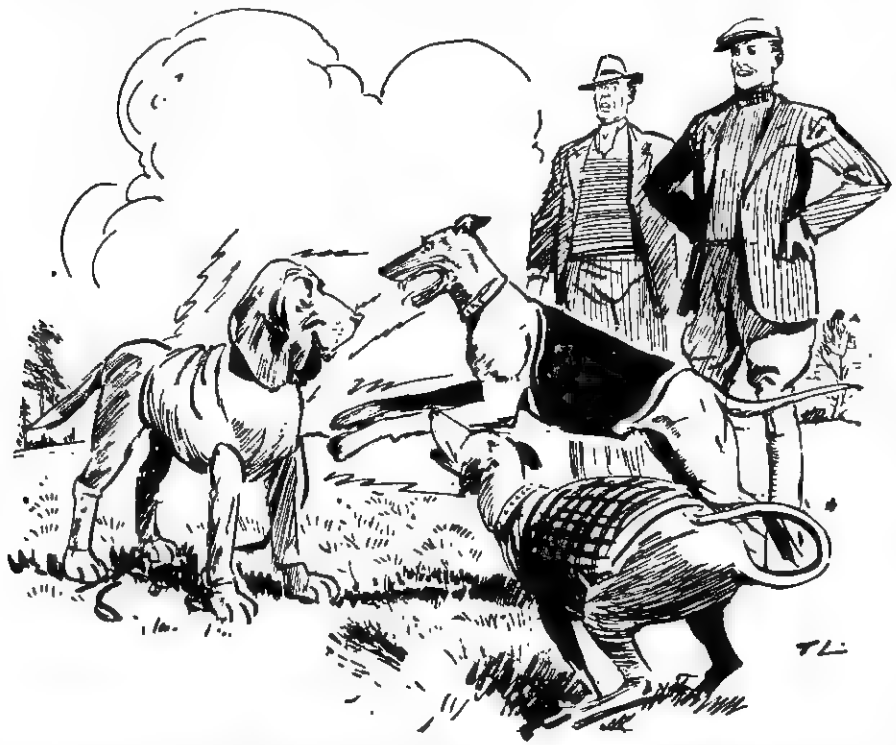
" The Boss has gone." It was his old enemy, the man in the sports jacket.

" Is Phido—the dog—still there? " asked Fred, sharply.

The man shrugged.

" He bolted. Got savage. And then as the Boss opened the door, the dog dashed past him and ran out on to the heath."

Fred stood still, and stared. " He bolted—of his own accord? "



At a command from their bad-tempered owner, the sleek greyhounds hurled themselves at Fred's electronic bloodhound. But taking a bite out of Phido was going to prove painful to them!

"Of course of his own accord," snorted the man. "Do you think we pushed him?" He turned to Stanton Wyx. "No need for you now, vet. The dog isn't sick."

Stanton Wyx said nothing for a moment, then he wheeled.

"Come on, Mr. Forbes," he bluffed. "Not a moment to lose. That dog is having one of his attacks and we must find him."

"But—how—er—I mean—why did he bolt?" stuttered Fred.

Fred knew that without instructions, Phido could not have bolted unless some fault in his mechanism had developed. Even then, the electronic bloodhound couldn't have turned corners and found his way to the heath without guidance.

"Hey, get back!" yelped the fat man—but Phido calmly walked on, between the fat man's legs. Race-track racketeers were in the building, and it was the dog detective's job to round them up!

"He couldn't have bolted, sir," Fred muttered as he and Stanton Wyx drove off.

"It is just possible," replied the detective. "But it's more likely that the crooks discovered his secret and have hidden him somewhere and intend to destroy him later. Just the same, if Phido is still—ahem—alive, and his basic motor is still working I'll find him."

"How?" asked Fred, amazed. "Phido could be anywhere."

The detective pointed to a special control panel near the dashboard of the car.

"You see that panel? It's for a direction-finding aerial that's fixed to the car. All the time Phido's motor is running, he's sending out a signal—and that aerial will pick it up."

He directed Fred to switch on and rotate the aerial control. Suddenly . . .

"Listen!" said Stanton Wyx.

From the loudspeaker on the control panel came a queer oscillating buzz.

"It's Phido!" snapped the professor-detective. "Give me a reading from that panel and direct me."

"Out through the gates . . . turn left . . ." instructed Fred. "Down the lane . . . the signal's getting stronger, chief, we're on the track."

Phido, runaway or prisoner was sending out his S.O.S., and his pal Fred was racing to the rescue.

WHAT THE SACK CONTAINED

"BAFFLED!"

Stanton Wyx, a frown on his brow, halted and stared about him at the edge of the heath. He had stopped the car hurriedly because signals had faded completely.

"Gosh, do you think they've bashed poor old Phido, sir?" asked Fred anxiously.

His chief did not answer, but looked about him again keenly. The expression on his face told Fred how furious he was—and how anxious for Phido.

Fred looked around him and spotted a line of trees and some scrub that bordered the heath. He rushed over to it and searched frantically. But there was no sign of Phido.

"We oughtn't to have left him," Fred groaned.

"We're not beaten yet," said Stanton Wyx resolutely. "I know we're not far from old Phido I want to make another test. Wait here, Fred."

He went back to the car and brought out a small box which he connected by means of a long lead to the car's battery.

"Even if Phido's main supply is switched off, his circuit will respond to this—provided the range is not too great," Stanton Wyx explained to the wondering Fred.

He rotated the parabolic reflector, sending out a beam signal while he watched an indicator needle on the front of the box.

" He's here," he exclaimed suddenly. " Buried!"

" Buried? " yelped Fred.

Then a sudden thought struck him as he remembered the man's last words before they left the kennels.

" I've got it, sir," Fred cried triumphantly. " They still thought Phido was a real dog when they took him away. That's why that chap back at the kennels was so surprised when I asked him if Phido went off on his own accord. He would have acted differently if they had found out Phido's secret. They would have kept him there."

" By Newton, I think you're right," Stanton Wyx snapped. " Of course, when Phido's artificial heart stopped beating they thought he was dead and buried him here. Phido felt cold because of his steel body—and they panicked! "

Fred snapped his fingers as he remembered something else.

" Those men we saw down the lane with spades—they must have buried him! "

The student detective suddenly spotted a mound of earth covered lightly with rubbish. Nearby was an area of disturbed earth obviously recently dug.

" This is it," said Stanton Wyx, when he'd examined the ground.

Fetching a collapsible spade from the boot of his car, Stanton Wyx started to dig. Then Fred took a turn.

" A sack," cried Fred suddenly as his spade unearthed a bulky object.

A few minutes later the whole sack was uncovered, and between them, the two 'tecs, struggling with its weight, hauled it out. Stanton Wyx ripped the dirty sacking aside—

" Good old Phido," Fred sighed with relief. " But has he been damaged? "

Stanton Wyx got busy and a few minutes later, on his command, Phido rose, his flanks heaved, and he growled. From the roadway behind the trio, came a gasp. Fred whirled, and saw the men he had seen previously carrying spades. They were now gaping in wonder at the sight of the dog they thought to be dead—growling at them.

" It's alive," one man gulped, but he got no further, for on Fred's whispered order, Phido leaped in his direction. The man and his companions fled, but Fred halted Phido and told him to return.

" Come on, you two," smiled Stanton Wyx, " into the car."

" D'you think the recording Phido made, will still be all right, chief? " Fred asked.

" I don't know, but we'll see when we get to Scotland Yard," replied the detective.

Twenty minutes later, Phido sat in an office before Stanton Wyx, Fred, and a detective-superintendent in charge of the dog-faking enquiries that the Yard were making.

Phido didn't move, but from his loudspeaker came the voice that Fred recognised immediately as the Boss at the greyhound kennels.

" We'll use Micky the Roosh," he said. " Run him tonight as Winsome Perce at the Middle Track."

Phido had recorded on the magnetic tape the whole plan the crooks had made in the office at the kennels. There followed some remarks about Phido. When someone said he thought the dog was dead, the Boss shouted " Get him out of here—say he bolted—bury him—quickly."

" That's where we came in," grinned Fred.

" Well, the case is up to Scotland Yard, now," smiled Stanton Wyx.

The detective-superintendent heaved a sigh.

" What a wonder that dog is! Pity we can't give him a chunk of meat as a reward," he said.

" He could do with some other kind of food, eh chief," chuckled Fred.

" Yes," Stanton Wyx replied. " If you don't mind, superintendent, we'll give Phido a treat."

Fred, at a nod from the superintendent, plugged a charging lead from Phido to the lamp socket and switched on. Phido, unable to enjoy meat, seemed to smirk as his batteries were recharged with the kind of " juice " he really relished!

ANSWERS TO " WORLD-WIDE QUIZ " *(See page 16)*

1. In the comedian's right hand. It is the manuscript from which he is reading.
2. " A " is a battleship ; " B " a cruiser ; " C " a motor torpedo-boat.
3. It means that the road has not been taken over by the local authority, but that it belongs to the owners of the property in the road.
4. The crawl.
5. " A "—Irish Sea ; " B "—Atlantic ; " C "—English Channel ; " D "—North Sea.
6. That two kinds of dinners are served. Table d'hote—one in which the courses are fixed by the management. A la carte—one in which the customer chooses his own courses from the menu.
7. Wales. The girl is wearing the Welsh national costume.
8. Siam.
9. A whistling kettle.
10. Chassis.
11. Jamaica. (An acre measures 4,840 square yards.)
12. To enable him to work his way across the ice without being seen by the seals.
13. The fatter one is a toad. It has a rough, knobbly skin. The frog is thinner and has a smooth skin.
14. The whale is an animal.
15. A valiha. Valetta is a town in Malta, and a Valeta is a dance.
16. Because it has four bogie wheels, then six big wheels, then two small ones.
17. A ju-ju. The native fears that he will suffer some evil if he passes it.

SKYWAY POLICE for the DESERT SHEIK

BY HUGH TEMPEST

BILL MARTIN AND HIS PAL, MIKE REGAN, WERE TWO YOUNG AIRMEN WHO HAD BEEN APPOINTED BY SHEIK SULIMAN TO ACT AS HIS DESERT PATROL. HE RULED OVER A VAST EXPANSE OF THE NORTH AFRICAN DESERT, AND IT WAS THEIR TASK TO POLICE THE TERRITORY BY AIR AND SEE THAT ALL WAS WELL

AS MIKE PILOTED THE PLANE ACROSS THE DESERT EARLY ONE MORNING, HE GRINNED ACROSS AT BILL

JUGGLING AGAIN, EH? YOU OUGHT TO BE ON THE BLINKIN' MUSIC-HALL STAGE!

NOT ME, BROTHER. I'D RATHER BE UP HERE--ALTHOUGH NOTHING EXCITING EVER SEEMS TO HAPPEN

THE VERY NEXT MOMENT BILL GAVE A GASP

HELLO, HELLO! WHAT'S GOING ON DOWN THERE? BANK HER OVER, MIKE--QUICK!

WELL, DUST MY PANTS! IT'S A GANG OF ARABS FIGHTING A PITCHED BATTLE!

GEE--IT'S HARDLY A BATTLE. ALL THE ARABS ARE ATTACKING ONE MAN--A WHITE MAN. THIS IS WHERE WE BUTT IN--PRONTO!

MIKE SENT THE MACHINE ROARING DOWN, TO SKIM ALONG JUST ABOVE THE GROUND

THAT'S SCARED THE LIVING DAYLIGHTS OUT OF THEM. BUT I SHOULDN'T BE SURPRISED IF WE'VE ARRIVED TOO LATE. THE WHITE MAN SEEMS TO HAVE COLLAPSED

I'LL LAND, BILL. WE MIGHT BE IN TIME TO DO SOMETHING FOR HIM

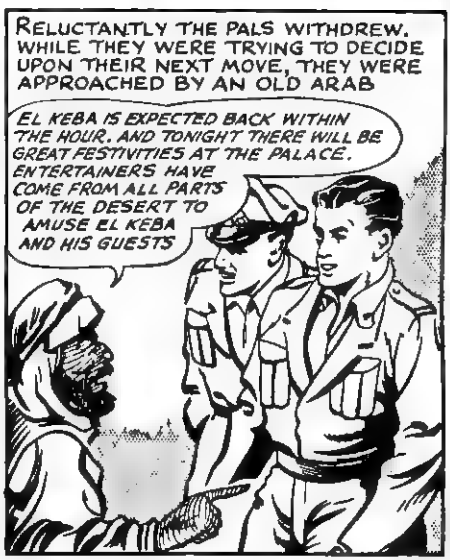
IGNORING THE FACT THAT THE ARABS MIGHT RETURN TO THE ATTACK, THE TWO YOUNG AIRMEN RACED TO THE FALLEN WHITE MAN
HE'S STILL ALIVE, MIKE - I SAW HIM MOVE
HIS SHOULDER IS BADLY WOUNDED. I'LL BANDAGE IT, THEN WE'LL HAVE TO RUSH HIM TO HOSPITAL
THE MAN WAS GRASPING A BRASS BOTTLE. WEAKLY HE HELD IT UP AND STRUGGLED TO SPEAK
ARABS TRY — TO ROB ME OF THIS. VERY VALUABLE. TAKE — TAKE TO SHEIK SULIMAN. EVERY SECOND COUNTS. UNLESS HE GETS IT VERY QUICKLY ---
THE WHITE MAN COULD SAY NO MORE. HE FELL BACK — UNCONSCIOUS
I RECOGNISE HIM NOW. HE'S A SCIENTIST NAMED FOWLER. HE OBTAINED PERMISSION FROM THE SHEIK SOME MONTHS AGO TO EXPLORE THE DESERT
IN THAT CASE, THIS BRASS BOTTLE MAY BE A VALUABLE RELIC WHICH HE HAS DISCOVERED IN SOME BURIED CITY
MIKE EXAMINED THE BOTTLE MORE CAREFULLY — THEN SHOOK HIS HEAD
THIS IS NO VALUABLE RELIC. IT'S JUST A CHEAP THING MADE IN BIRMINGHAM
THEN WHY SHOULD THOSE ARABS TRY TO KILL HIM SO AS TO GET HOLD OF IT? IT SEEMS JOLLY MYSTERIOUS TO ME. THE BEST THING WE CAN DO IS TO TAKE IT TO THE SHEIK
MADE IN BIRMINGHAM
AS BILL AND MIKE LIFTED UP THE EXPLORER, NEITHER SAW A SINISTER-LOOKING ARAB STEALTHILY CLIMB INTO THEIR PLANE
BOTTLE OR NO BOTTLE, WE MUST GET THIS CHAP TO HOSPITAL FIRST OF ALL
SURE, AND THEN WE'LL REPORT TO THE SHEIK

WITHIN A FEW MINUTES THE PLANE WAS HEADING FOR THE NEAREST DESERT TOWN— AND, HIDDEN AT THE REAR OF THE CABIN, THE ARAB STOWAWAY CAST GREEDY EYES AT THE BRASS BOTTLE
ALL GOES WELL. THE INFIDELS SUSPECT NOTHING. THAT WHICH WE SOUGHT WILL SOON BE IN MY HANDS!
MIKE HAD ALREADY RADIOED FOR AN AMBULANCE TO BE READY, AND IT CAME SPEEDING ALONG THE INSTANT THE PLANE LANDED
POOR OLD FOWLER IS STILL UNCONSCIOUS, BUT I GUESS HE'LL SOON PULL ROUND ONCE HE'S IN HOSPITAL
IT WAS WHILE THE WOUNDED SCIENTIST WAS BEING LIFTED INTO THE AMBULANCE THAT MIKE UTTERED A YELL OF AMAZEMENT
HEY! LOOK AT THAT ARAB! HE'S PINCHED THE BRASS BOTTLE!
AFTER HIM, MIKE! DON'T LET HIM ESCAPE WITH IT!
ANGRILY THE PALS WENT TEARING IN PURSUIT OF THE THIEVING ARAB
HE MUST HAVE STOWED AWAY IN THE PLANE. BUT WHY THE PURPLE PYRAMIDS SHOULD HE STEAL AN OLD BRASS BOTTLE?
THAT'S A MYSTERY WE'VE STILL TO SOLVE
IF WE AREN'T CAREFUL HE'LL DODGE US IN THIS BLINKING CROWD. HEY— STOP THIEF!.
HUH! NONE OF THIS MOB WILL BE LIKELY TO STOP HIM!

THE PALS TURNED A CORNER JUST IN TIME TO SEE THE ARAB DISAPPEAR THROUGH A COURTYARD GATEWAY
WELL, DUST MY PANTS! HE'S ENTERING THE HOUSE OF EL KEBA
EL KEBA, EH? GEE--THIS LITTLE ADVENTURE IS BECOMING EVEN MORE SINISTER THAN I EXPECTED

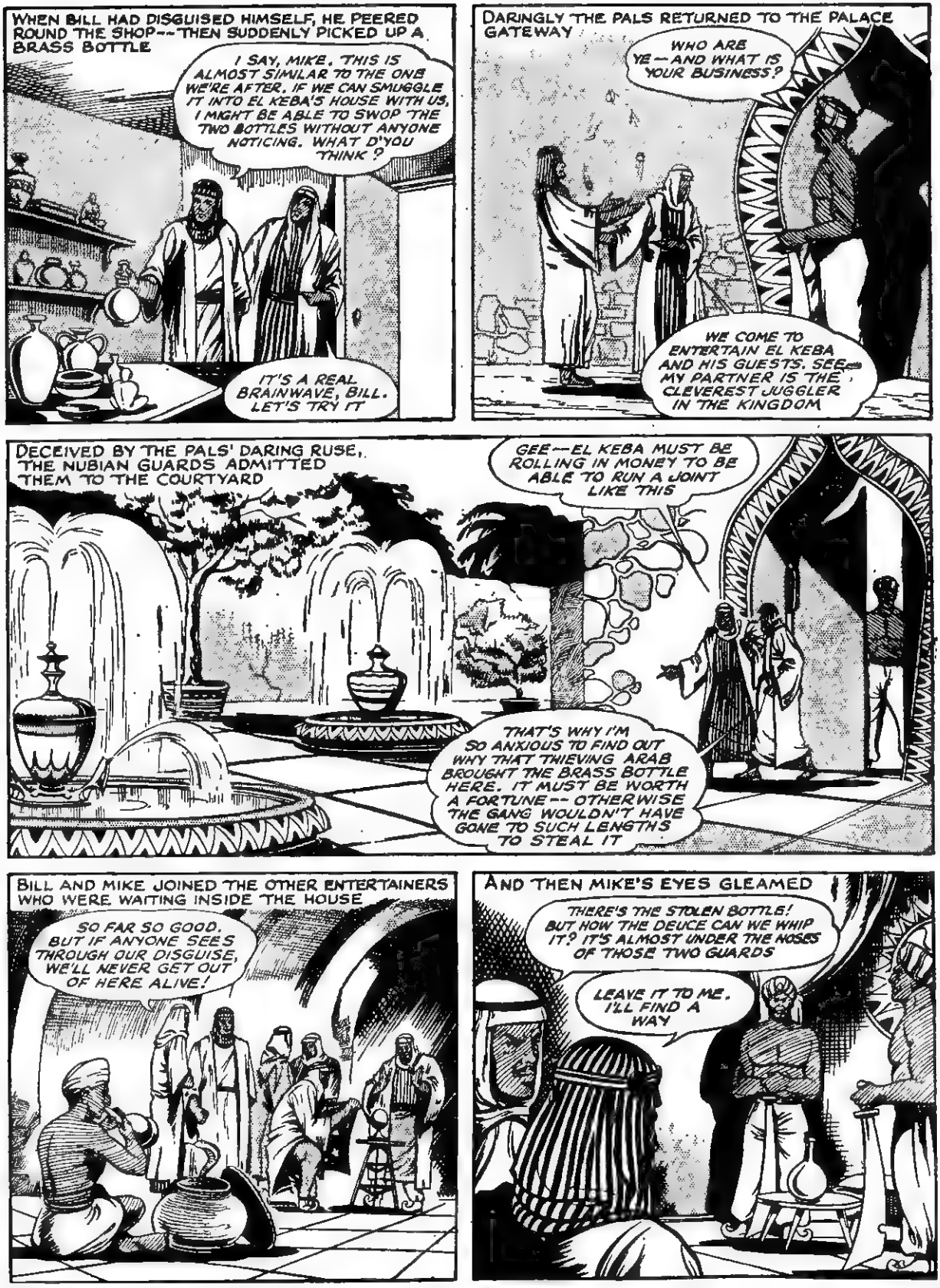
MIKE KNEW THAT EL KEBA WAS ONE OF THE BIGGEST AND WEALTHIEST CROOKS IN THE WHOLE OF NORTH AFRICA. HE HAD CAUSED MORE TROUBLE IN THE SHEIK'S TERRITORY THAN ALL THE REST OF THE ARABS PUT TOGETHER. YET NEVER HAD IT BEEN POSSIBLE TO BRING HIM TO JUSTICE, SO CUNNINGLY HAD HE CONCEALED HIS GUILT. WHY, NOW, SHOULD A THIEF TAKE TO HIM AN OLD BRASS BOTTLE WHICH WAS APPARENTLY WORTHLESS ?

BILL AND MIKE WOULD HAVE DARTED THROUGH THE GATEWAY, BUT--
BEGONE, WHITE INFIDELS. DEATH COMES TO ALL WHO ENTER THE PALACE UNINVITED


RELUCTANTLY THE PALS WITHDREW. WHILE THEY WERE TRYING TO DECIDE UPON THEIR NEXT MOVE, THEY WERE APPROACHED BY AN OLD ARAB
EL KEBA IS EXPECTED BACK WITHIN THE HOUR. AND TONIGHT THERE WILL BE GREAT FESTIVITIES AT THE PALACE. ENTERTAINERS HAVE COME FROM ALL PARTS OF THE DESERT TO AMUSE EL KEBA AND HIS GUESTS

AS THE OLD ARAB SHUFFLED AWAY, A DARING IDEA CAME TO BILL
I'VE GOT IT, MIKE! WE'LL DISGUISE OURSELVES AND GET INTO EL KEBA'S HOUSE BY PRETENDING WE'RE ENTERTAINERS. I'LL DO MY JUGGLING ACT, AND YOU CAN PLAY THE PART OF MY ASSISTANT. WILL YOU RISK IT?
RISK IT? LIKE A SHOT! THE MYSTERY OF THAT BRASS BOTTLE HAS GOT ME GUESSING - AND WE WON'T REST UNTIL WE'VE SOLVED IT

THE PALS WENT AT ONCE TO THE SHOP OF A FRIENDLY NATIVE
THIS BURNOUS IS JUST ABOUT THE RIGHT LENGTH FOR ME
AND WE CAN USE THIS JAR OF DYE TO STAIN OUR ARMS AND FACES. NOW TO TURN OURSELVES INTO A COUPLE OF ARABS!


WHEN BILL HAD DISGUISED HIMSELF, HE PEERED ROUND THE SHOP--THEN SUDDENLY PICKED UP A BRASS BOTTLE
I SAY, MIKE. THIS IS ALMOST SIMILAR TO THE ONE WE'RE AFTER. IF WE CAN SMUGGLE IT INTO EL KEBA'S HOUSE WITH US, I MIGHT BE ABLE TO SWOP THE TWO BOTTLES WITHOUT ANYONE NOTICING. WHAT D'YOU THINK?
IT'S A REAL BRAINWAVE, BILL. LET'S TRY IT
DARINGLY THE PALS RETURNED TO THE PALACE GATEWAY
WHO ARE YE--AND WHAT IS YOUR BUSINESS?
WE COME TO ENTERTAIN EL KEBA AND HIS GUESTS. SEE--MY PARTNER IS THE CLEVEREST JUGGLER IN THE KINGDOM
DECEIVED BY THE PALS' DARING RUSE, THE NUBIAN GUARDS ADMITTED THEM TO THE COURTYARD
GEE--EL KEBA MUST BE ROLLING IN MONEY TO BE ABLE TO RUN A JOINT LIKE THIS
THAT'S WHY I'M SO ANXIOUS TO FIND OUT WHY THAT THIEVING ARAB BROUGHT THE BRASS BOTTLE HERE. IT MUST BE WORTH A FORTUNE--OTHERWISE THE GANG WOULDN'T HAVE GONE TO SUCH LENGTHS TO STEAL IT
BILL AND MIKE JOINED THE OTHER ENTERTAINERS WHO WERE WAITING INSIDE THE HOUSE
SO FAR SO GOOD. BUT IF ANYONE SEES THROUGH OUR DISGUISE, WE'LL NEVER GET OUT OF HERE ALIVE!
AND THEN MIKE'S EYES GLEAMED
THERE'S THE STOLEN BOTTLE! BUT HOW THE DEUCE CAN WE WHIP IT? IT'S ALMOST UNDER THE NOSES OF THOSE TWO GUARDS
LEAVE IT TO ME. I'LL FIND A WAY

AT LAST EL KEBA ARRIVED WITH HIS GUESTS
GOSH -- WOULDN'T HIS NIBS GET A SHOCK IF HE FOUND OUT WHO WE ARE!
LET THE ENTERTAINMENT BEGIN. AND SEE THAT MY GUESTS AND I ARE WELL AMUSED
BILL STEPPED FORWARD AND SKILFULLY PERFORMED ONE OF HIS MATCH TRICKS
CLEVERLY DONE, FELLOW. SHOW ME MORE
BILL OBLIGED
EXCELLENT! EXCELLENT!
WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELID, BILL THEN PICKED UP THE STOLEN BRASS BOTTLE
I WILL NOW SHOW YOUR EXCELLENCIES THAT I DO NOT NEED SPECIALLY-PREPARED APPARATUS. BEHOLD!
MIKE WATCHED BREATHLESSLY
THIS IS WHERE BILL INTENDS TO SWOP HIS BOTTLE FOR THE STOLEN ONE. IF HE MAKES A SLIP IT'LL BE CURTAINS FOR THE PAIR OF US!

ALL AT ONCE DISASTER STRUCK... THE STOPPER SLIPPED OUT OF THE STOLEN BOTTLE, AND SOME LIQUID GUSHED OVER ONE OF BILL'S ARMS
BY THE PURPLE PYRAMIDS--THE BOTTLE WAS FULL OF OIL! I CAN SMELL IT!

BEFORE BILL COULD RECOVER HIMSELF, ONE OF THE NUBIANS LET OUT A YELL
MASTER! THIS MAN IS NO ARAB. HE IS A WHITE INFIDEL! THE LIQUID HAS REMOVED BROWN STAIN FROM HIS ARM!

IN A FLASH THE TWO PALS WERE SURROUNDED AND THEIR DISGUISES RIPPED OFF THEM. EL KEBA THEN FACED THEM STERNLY
I KNOW WHO YOU ARE — AND I CAN GUESS WHY YOU CAME HERE. BUT YOU ARE TOO LATE. EVEN NOW MY BROTHER IS ON HIS WAY TO MEET THE SHEIK. THE SHEIK KNOWS NOT THE VALUE OF THE LAND WHERE THE OIL CAME FROM. HE WILL SELL IT TO MY BROTHER AND ME FOR NEXT TO NOTHING!

BILL AND MIKE REALISED AT ONCE THAT MR. FOWLER, THE SCIENTIST, HAD DISCOVERED OIL-BEARING LAND. HE HAD BEEN CARRYING A SAMPLE OF THE OIL IN THE OLD BRASS BOTTLE. BUT MEMBERS OF EL KEBA'S GANG HAD BEEN SPYING ON HIM, AND HAD PLANNED TO ROB HIM OF THE SAMPLE AND TAKE IT TO THEIR UNSCRUPULOUS LEADER

IT SEEMED THAT THE PALS WERE HELPLESS. BILL, HOWEVER, SUDDENLY SHOT A STREAM OF OIL ACROSS THE NEAREST DIVAN
I'LL BEAT YOUR FOUL SCHEME YET, EL KEBA!

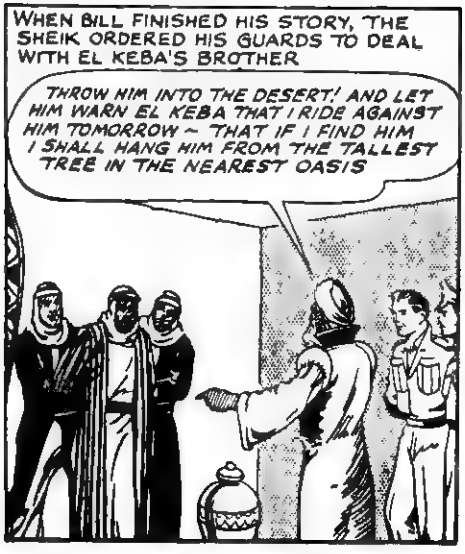
THE BURNING CUSHIONS CAUSED A TREMENDOUS SMOKE CLOUD TO RISE, AND, UNDER COVER OF IT, THE TWO PALS DARTED FOR THE DOOR
SLAY THE INFIDELS! KILL THEM!

THE FIRE SPREAD RAPIDLY. IN THE CONFUSION BILL AND MIKE MADE THEIR ESCAPE TO THE AIR-STRIP AND SET OFF IN THEIR PLANE
EL KEBA'S BROTHER MAY NOT HAVE REACHED THE SHEIK YET. IF WE CAN GET TO THE PALACE IN TIME, WE MAY STILL STOP THE SALE OF THE OIL-BEARING LAND!

AN HOUR LATER, IN HIS PALACE, THE SHEIK STARTED NEGOTIATIONS WITH HIS CUNNING VISITOR
MY BROTHER, EL KEBA, HAS AUTHORISED ME TO BUY THIS LAND FROM YOU, SHEIK SULIMAN. I THINK THE PRICE HE OFFERS IS A VERY FAIR ONE
AS I HAVE NO USE FOR THE LAND, I ACCEPT YOUR OFFER. THE NECESSARY DOCUMENTS SHALL BE SIGNED AT ONCE

THE SHEIK PICKED UP A PEN. BUT, BEFORE HE COULD SIGN, BILL AND MIKE ARRIVED
STOP, SHEIK! DON'T SIGN THOSE PAPERS. TAKE A LOOK AT THIS BOTTLE!

MR. FOWLER, THE SCIENTIST, HAS FOUND OIL ON THE LAND EL KEBA WANTS TO BUY. HE WAS BRINGING THE BOTTLE OF OIL TO YOU AS A SAMPLE WHEN HE WAS ATTACKED AND ROBBED BY SOME OF EL KEBA'S MEN


WHEN BILL FINISHED HIS STORY, THE SHEIK ORDERED HIS GUARDS TO DEAL WITH EL KEBA'S BROTHER
THROW HIM INTO THE DESERT! AND LET HIM WARN EL KEBA THAT I RIDE AGAINST HIM TOMORROW – THAT IF I FIND HIM I SHALL HANG HIM FROM THE TALLEST TREE IN THE NEAREST OASIS

THAT AFTERNOON, SHEIK SULIMAN, IN COMPANY WITH BILL AND MIKE, VISITED MR. FOWLER IN HOSPITAL. THEY FOUND THE SCIENTIST RECOVERING FROM HIS WOUND, AND HE CONFIRMED THAT THE OIL-BEARING LAND WHICH HE HAD FOUND WAS WORTH UNTOLD MILLIONS

BILL AND MIKE WERE PRESENT SOME WEEKS LATER WHEN SHEIK SULIMAN SIGNED OVER THE OIL-WORKING CONCESSION TO MR. FOWLER
THIS MEANS A FORTUNE FOR ALL OF US – INCLUDING YOU, BILL AND MIKE. BUT FOR YOUR COURAGE I SHOULD HAVE DIED IN THE DESERT
I GUESS IT'S BILL'S JUGGLING SKILL THAT REALLY TURNED THE TABLES ON OLD EL KEBA!
THE END.

The T.V. Thrill-Hunters

By Trevor Hugh

SHOT DOWN!

"THAT ees the story, Senor Masters. Eet has been whispered, from tribe to tribe, from the distant depths of ze unexplored Peruvian jungle. But in ze jungles of Peru lie terror and death."

Parry Masters, ace cameraman whose job it was to take newsreel pictures for television, jerked up from the cane chair in which he had been lounging. He gazed excitedly at the South American facing him. He scented a scoop!

Parry, and his freckle-faced assistant Vince Hallam, were in Santa Purto, a big Peruvian coast town. The famous pair of T.V. newsreel cameramen were enjoying a well-earned break. But the South American hotel-keeper's story, to which they had just listened, had driven all thoughts of further rest from Parry's mind.

"By heck. If your story's true, then it would be the biggest T.V. newsreel scoop of the year," Parry gasped. His powerful fist hammered on the arm of his chair, and he swung round to his pal. "Vince, my son, I have a mighty strong hunch that it is true."

Vince grinned eagerly. Parry was the shrewdest cameraman in the business. His clever hunches were rarely wrong. Vince knew it was time to start packing the camera gear.

In his eagerness Parry gripped the hotel-keeper by the arm.

"Now tell me if I've got the story straight, amigo. You say that there's an unknown tribe, living up country in a remote part of Peru, which has two sacred animals—the only two of their kind in the world. They're pterodactyls, prehistoric winged monsters, the last one of which was reckoned to have died millions of years ago—perhaps before the first man walked the earth!"

The excitable hotel-keeper, eyes flashing, nodded vigorously.

"Si, Senor Masters, zat is correct. Ze tribe worship ze pterodactyls. But surely you cannot mean to venture into zere territory and photograph ze animals? Ze jungle ees a death-trap; you

Braving Unknown Jungle Perils to Solve a Million-Year-Old Mystery!

would nevare come out of it alive. Eet is madness to go zere."

Parry whooped loudly, and slapped the concerned hotel-keeper heartily on the back.

"Madness or not, brother, Vince and I are going. This is a scoop in a thousand—and a couple of newshounds like us are straining at the leash to put it on film . . . Vince, gather up our gear. We're off—to photograph a couple of real, live, pterodactyls!"

While his partner packed the camera equipment, Parry put through a 'phone call. After a hurried conversation he replaced the receiver.

His pal, Vince, suddenly frowned.

"You know, Parry, it's going to be mighty hard travelling through that jungle. By the time we locate that tribe with the pterodactyls, we and the equipment are liable to be worn out."

Vince chuckled, and gripped his pal's arm reassuringly.

"You're dead right, my lad. But it won't happen—because I've just 'phoned the local airport and arranged to hire a helicopter. We'll fly out to the tribe in real style."

"You're a genius, Parry," grinned Vince, but then his expression became serious again. "I sure hope we're not going on a fool's errand. If it's all a lot of hooey about that tribe having a pair of rare reptiles, then we're due to lose a lot of money."

Soon all the camera equipment was packed and stacked neatly in the hotel lobby. The pals changed into tropical kit, said goodbye to the worried-looking hotel-keeper, and picked up their bags. A few seconds later they were on the sunlit pavement and loading their luggage into an old taxi.

Within a minute the two pals were relaxing in the back of the taxi, as it whisked them away towards the airport.

"I realise we're taking a great gamble, Vince," Parry suddenly burst out. "But as I said before, I've got a mighty strong hunch that there's something in this story about the pterodactyls. And if the story's true, and we can secure some newsreel shots of 'em, we'll have pulled off the most sensational scoop of our careers."

Parry slid his hand into his shirt, and gripped a tiny metal case, no larger than a match-box. This was Parry's own mysterious and amazing secret invention.

It was a unique film-camera and recording machine. With it, many was the time that Parry had secretly secured T.V. newsreel scoops, complete with sound recordings. All he had to do, to put it into motion, was to touch what looked like an ordinary shirt-button. Through a buttonhole, the camera secretly took pictures.

The taxi whirled across the 'drome and skidded to a stop beside a helicopter. Parry wasted no time. With a brief word of thanks to the 'drome officials, he climbed into the pilot's seat. Vince hastened after him with the camera gear.

Parry revved up the motor. Above their heads the wide rotor blade spun into rapid motion. Vince grinned as he watched the ground drop away beneath them.

"You're a marvel, Parry," he yelled above the roar of the motor. "You get things organised quicker than it takes most chaps to even think of 'em. By heck, no one else would have thought of travelling to that remote jungle tribe by 'copter. Gee whizz, if those natives really have a couple of ptera—whatever you call 'em—it shouldn't be long before we have the reptiles in our camera viewfinders."

Parry chuckled.

"The reptiles are pterodactyls, Vince. But we've got to locate the tribe first," he yelled back. "And don't forget, the tribe may be hostile. Look, we're over the jungle, already. Get the camera churning, Vince. We can get some good shots from up here."

Cheerily Vince focused his camera, while Parry set himself to steering the fast-flying helicopter. All traces of civilisation were soon left far behind. The jungle below grew more dense, as hour after hour they sped above the trackless Peruvian wilds.

"Keep your eyes skinned," Parry shouted. "I figure we're nearing the part of the jungle where the tribe is reckoned to live. And keep your camera at the ready, in case you see the pterodactyls roaming around."

"You bet," Vince yelled back, enthusiastically. "Are we going to land if we sight the tribe's village?"

Before Parry could reply, there came two terrifying sounds!

CRACK!

PHLUTT!

From the motor there was sudden splutter—and silence.

Parry spun round in his seat while Vince desperately gripped the camera. Above them, the huge helicopter-blade was slowing down. Below them was a forest of towering jungle trees.

"By heck," Parry roared, as he studied the engine. "Vince, there's a bullet hole through the petrol feed pipe. Someone has shot at us!"

THE CITY OF THE INCAS

"LOOKS like the finish for us," Vince gritted.

"Nuts," came Parry's swift retort. "Keep that camera turning. We'll get a dandy newsreel of a crash landing. I'm going to put this helicopter down in one piece!"

As he spoke, Parry had one eye on the blade above, which was slowing. The helicopter was beginning to drop still faster with every second. The menacing jungle trees rushed up at speed.

"What I'd like to know," Vince gasped, while the camera in his hands relentlessly recorded their disastrous descent, "is who the heck could have shot us down? And—why?"

Parry made no reply. He was feverishly searching for an opening in the forest below.

"Hang on, Vince," Parry suddenly roared.

Vince grabbed at his set with one hand while he grimly kept the camera focused on his chum's desperate effort to prevent a death-dealing crash. Next second he was almost catapulted through the side screen.

Parry had hurled himself sideways. The helicopter swung violently over in its downward plunge. Before Vince could recover, Parry threw his full weight in the opposite direction. The machine tilted over the other way, then the impetus of Parry's double action sent it spiralling in a downward curve.

SPLASH!

A wall of slimy water cascaded over the helicopter as it landed, throwing the two pals together in a heap.

"Wh—what's happened?" Vince stammered, heaving himself on to his knees.

"We've landed in a pool," Parry replied. "I spotted it and tilted the 'copter sideways, and glided down into it. Heck, but it was a near thing."

He clambered to his feet. He grunted with satisfaction as he peered over the side. The helicopter was upright in the slime-covered pool. The water had saved the aircraft from serious damage, and between them the chums hauled the machine up the shallow bank and on to dry land.

"Jumpin' creepers," Vince muttered, peering round him into the dense jungle. "No wonder white people seldom come into this jungle. It's as solid as—as a wall." And he hugged his camera tightly.

"It's certainly thick enough to conceal the crook who shot us down," was Parry's fierce retort. His powerful fists bunched menacingly. "I'd give something to lay my hands on him."

His keen eyes searched the silent jungle. His hand suddenly jerked out to Vince, drawing him into the shadow of some thorny bushes. Vince shot a quick glance at his pal. Parry's face was tense, jaw jutting dangerously.

"Someone coming," Parry hissed, and as he spoke his hand jerked to his shirt. There was a tiny click as he switched on his hidden camera and sound-recorder.

A stealthy stirring of the bushes attracted the pals' attention. Slowly the bushes parted. Into the small clearing near the damaged helicopter crept a white man. In his hand he clasped a powerful rifle.

Parry tensed.

"He's the crook who fired at our 'copter," he gritted, his secret camera filming the rifleman. "He's searching the helicopter. He figures we're still in it, stunned by the crash and unconscious."

Parry's shrewd whisper was swiftly proved correct.

The gunman stole cautiously to the helicopter, and peered into its cockpit. For a moment he stood, as though transfixed with surprise. Then he spun round, eyes blazing with murderous rage as they darted around, searching the bushes.

"He's hopping mad because we've escaped," Vince breathed. "By gosh—I wish we'd got guns with us. I'd give him a taste of what he gave us."

Parry stilled his pal's fierce whisper. He planned to trap the gunman and discover the reason for shooting down the helicopter. Stooping, he picked up a stone. Next moment, it was spinning through the air, to fall lightly in nearby bushes.

The crook whirled round, his gun swinging menacingly at the bushes.

With one terrific leap, Parry sprang from cover. The gunman whirled. His bearded mouth opened wide in a bellow of rage, and he leapt backwards.

Parry's clenched knuckles swung at the crook's jaw. Vince streaked after his pal, into the clearing. Parry's fist connected, but as it did so, the gun barrel crashed across his temple. Parry staggered, half-stunned, and stumbled into Vince. The crook sprang sideways, gun levelled.

"Get your hands up," he raged. He shook his head, which was singing with the pain of Parry's blow. "Get 'em up, afore I blow your head off."

The unarmed chums were forced to obey. Parry swiftly recovered from the stunning rifle blow. He darted a cautious glance at his shirt, and breathed more freely. His secret camera and recorder was unharmed—it was filming and recording all that was taking place.

Into Parry's mind leapt a startling thought.

"I wonder if this crook has heard about the pterodactyls," he said to himself. "Perhaps they are his reason for being here. I'll play my cards carefully and find out."

The crook was examining the helicopter while keeping Parry and Vince covered. It was clear to the T.V. newsreel cameramen that the gunman knew sufficient about its motor to see it wasn't badly damaged. For his lips twisted into a grin.

"That was a good shot," he guffawed. "It's only busted the petrol feed. That's soon fixed. When I've finished what I came into this jungle to do, you two suckers are goin' to fly me back to

the outskirts of Santa Purto. Then, *after I've dealt with you two*——" and he chuckled menacingly, "I can disappear and be rich for life. Think of it—me, Bat Renshaw, millionaire."

Parry stiffened at the crook's last words. What did he mean—"rich for life?" The gunman's harsh voice ripped into his rapid thoughts.

"Come on, the pair of you. MARCH!"

Cocking the rifle ominously at the two newsreel chums, he forced them in front of him.

Their trek was short. Unexpectedly rounding a clump of bushes, they stepped into what had once been a vast clearing.

Everywhere lay the crumbled ruins of a long-forgotten race. Great walls, overgrown with jungle creepers, and massive colonnaded buildings filled the jungle clearing. In their midst was a ruin, more extensive and taller than the others.

"It's an old Inca Temple," Vince exclaimed excitedly. "But I don't see any sign of life."

"Down the steps," snarled the crook, and his gun poked threateningly at them.

At the foot of the crumbled stone steps the chums were forced into a dark dungeon. The door closed behind them. Parry whipped round—but he was too late. The sound of a bar being dropped into place was followed by the gunman's jeering laugh.

Then, they heard the sound of the gunman walking away.

The chums were prisoners in the derelict city of the Incas!

A MILLION POUND CAPTURE!

"BY heck, this looks like a T.V. newsreel scoop that isn't going to be broadcast," groaned Vince. "We come here to contact a tribe and take photos of pterodactyls, and that crazy gunman shoots us down and locks us up!"

Vince's glum words echoed back from the grim walls of their dungeon prison. A rapid examination had swiftly shown there could be no way out of the dungeon, except by the door. And that was securely barred on the other side.

Parry fingered his secret miniature camera-recorder. In it, every word and action of the gunman had been faithfully filmed and recorded. It would make a great news item for showing on T.V.

But there was something far more sensational that had to be filmed. The two pterodactyls owned by the jungle tribe!

"We're getting out of here—and we're finding out what crooked game that no-good Bat Renshaw is playing," Parry announced grimly. "Tell you what, Vince—I've a strong hunch that the crook has heard about the pterodactyls. And if he has, he's more likely to steal 'em than photograph 'em."

Vince gasped at his chum's amazing statement.

"But——but we've got to get out of here first," he breathed. "How can we do that? The walls are solid, and without windows."

"I've got an idea," Parry rapped, and he flashed his pocket torch round the floor of the huge dungeon. "Look, Vince. That dungeon door must have stood wide open for years and years. And during that time, leaves and dead twigs and grass have blown in here."

Vince's gaze followed the torch's beam. Everywhere the floor was covered with dried debris from the overgrown city. His gaze darted back to Parry. What plan was in his pal's head?

"Pile it against the door," Parry ordered, and in his own powerful arms he swept up vast loads of dry leaves.

A few seconds later—"Tie your handkerchief over your mouth and nose, and lie flat on the floor," Parry warned. "Keep your mouth as near the ground as you can."

Vince hurriedly obeyed, as Parry took out a lighter. Next moment, a flame flickered at the foot of the pile of tinder-dry debris against the wooden door. In a few seconds, it was blazing furiously. Parry threw himself to the ground beside Vince.

"If that crook doesn't spot the smoke first, we'll bust through the door when the fire has burned into the timbers and weakened them," he cried, through the muffling handkerchief.

They lay tense while the flames roared. The dried debris burned so easily there was little smoke from the raging fire. The chums could see clearly into the heart of the blaze. Suddenly, Parry leapt to his feet.

Vince gasped at his chum's next action.

Parry hurled himself across the dungeon—and then, with a tremendous jump, flung himself full at the flame-weakened door!

As he made his leap, it almost seemed as though the flames reached out eagerly—to destroy him.

Above the roar of the fire a rending crash burst upon Vince's ears. Suddenly the flames were no longer beating upwards, against the door. They were pouring through a huge gap in the door's timbers.

Parry had daringly gone right through the door. The fire-ridden, aged timbers had crumbled!

Vince jumped to his feet. Covering his face, and tucking his camera under one arm, he raced across the floor towards the gaping hole in the burning door. With a great leap he followed his brave pal, and came up beside Parry.

"Good work, Parry," he panted, hastily brushing sparks from his clothes. He cast an anxious glance at the T.V. newsreel ace. "Gosh—that was the pluckiest thing I've ever seen——"

"Come on, pal," Parry cried, leaping up the steps. "We've a job to finish, before Bat Renshaw

discovers we've escaped from the dungeon. We're going to locate that tribe and photograph the pterodactyls."

Vince raced after him. At the top of the steps, he caught his pal by the arm.

"You reckon the crook is set on capturing the reptiles, Parry. If that's true, then the tribe can't be far from here. But we don't know whether they're north, south, east or west of us. While we're scouting around trying to find their village, the crook is liable to snaffle the pterodactyls."

Frowning, Parry looked about him. Suddenly his eyes lit up. He gave an excited whoop and pointed to the far end of the ruins.

"Look, pal, look! There's no need for us to find the village at all."

A file of Indians had emerged from the thick jungle. At their rear was Bat Renshaw, the crook. In his hand was his rifle, which he waved menacingly at the natives. He had obviously demonstrated to the natives how powerful the weapon was, because they cringed fearfully from it.

Two large wooden cages were being carried by the natives. Inside each cage was a scaly, long-necked, winged reptile!

"The pterodactyls!" yelled Parry, instinctively switching on his secret camera. "Look at 'em, Vince. You, me, and that crook Bat Renshaw, are the only white men ever to have set eyes on them. They were thought to be extinct."

Anger replaced the excitement on Parry's face.

"Everything's crystal clear now, Vince. Bat Renshaw plans to take the pterodactyls out to civilisation, and sell 'em for a fantastic price to some showman or other. But he's not getting away with it. We're filming them, but he's not stealing them. I'm quite sure that those reptiles would die if they left this place!"

"What are we going to do?" breathed Vince. "Luckily neither Renshaw nor the Indians have seen us."

"Follow them," Parry muttered.

Together the chums stole after the procession, taking care not to be seen.

The file reached the small pool where the helicopter had landed. The crook snapped out a harsh order. One by one the unhappy Indians loaded the two crates containing the rare pterodactyls into the helicopter standing next to the muddy water.

At that moment Parry shinned up a tree. From branch to branch he crept, until he was above the unsuspecting crook. The gunman still grasped his rifle, alert for any attack from the sullen Indians.

Now the two pals were poised on the branch. Vince filmed the whole scene.

Then Parry went into action again.

He dropped full on to the crook, from high above. They crashed to the ground. The rifle fell from the man's grasp. Parry leapt for it. The crook gave a wild yell of terror as he saw that Parry had the gun. Next instant, he turned and ran off into the bushes.

"After him," roared Parry making sure that his secret camera was still filming.

"There he goes," Parry bellowed as they burst into the ruined city—and then saw the crook disappear amid the ruins!

Together the chums and the Indians, who

Parry launched himself across the centuries-old prison, straight at the blazing door. He was staking his life on a desperate bid for freedom!

realised that the two white men were their friends, searched the ruins. But the evil Bat Renshaw had cunningly hidden himself in one of the cellars that honeycombed the old city.

"I've an idea to flush him out," Parry gritted. "We can't leave him here, free to make a second attempt to steal the pterodactyls from the Indians. We've got to find him, take him back to civilisation, and hand him over to the authorities."

Parry led the way to a swiftly-running stream which coursed down from the surrounding hills. It ran through the old city, and fell away through a culvert into the valley below. Swiftly Parry issued instructions to the Indians, who willingly obeyed them.

In a short while the Indians built a sturdy dam across the culvert, completely blocking it. The water piled up in the stream, then began to overflow its low banks, flooding across the ruined city's streets. Soon it was pouring into the cellars!

A terrified yell rent the air. From a crumbled opening appeared the soaked Bat Renshaw.

He cast a wild glance around, and as he saw Parry racing through the rising flood towards him, turned away.

He floundered through the water. Parry grimly sped after him. Renshaw reached the blocked culvert. He was cornered. There was no escape. Desperately he tried to climb from it. His scrabbling feet opened a hole in the stone dam.

The water began to race through. Then Parry leapt on him.

"All right, smart guy," Renshaw grated. "I give in."

Parry lowered his fists. Instantly, the scheming crook leapt upright, a jagged rock in his grasp. With a scream of rage, he hurled it with all his force at Parry's head.

There was a sudden cry of terror!

Parry ducked; the rock whistled past him. But the crook's foot slipped in the racing water. Next instant, screaming, he was being whirled from sight, through the hole in the blocked culvert.

Vince and the Indians came tearing up. Grimly they gazed at the hole and the water pounding through it. They realised that the crook had paid for his crimes—with his life.

Parry turned to the Indians, and approached their smiling Chief.

"The evil white man will bother you no more, Chief. Your pterodactyls are safe."

The Indian Chief, still smiling, nodded his head. At that moment a thought struck Parry.

"Flickering flashlights, how stupid can I get?" He turned, grinning, to Vince. "Vince, old pal, I've been nattering to the Chief here, not realising that he doesn't understand a word I say. Guess I'll have to try sign language."

By making all sorts of gestures with his hands, Parry succeeded in putting over the reason for the T.V. pals' visit. The grateful Chief then led them back to the helicopter, and the caged pterodactyls were unloaded.

To the amazement of Parry and Vince, the natives opened the cages and allowed the strange-looking reptiles to walk out. Both reptiles were roughly the same size; they had long necks, and a wing span of about ten feet.

The Chief strode up to them and affectionately stroked their ugly heads.

"Well, can you beat that?" gulped Parry, as Vince excitedly filmed the scene. "The pterodactyls are as tame as pet rabbits. Gosh, won't the viewers sit up and take notice when this sight appears on their T.V. screens!"

Only when their supply of film was exhausted did the T.V. thrill-hunters pack up their equipment and load it aboard the helicopter. Parry repaired the broken fuel line, and then turned to the Indian Chief.

"Well, cheerio, Chief," he said cheerily, gripping the Indian by the hand. "Thanks for everything."

The two pals climbed into their helicopter. Parry started the engine, the wide rotors revolved——and to the cheers of the watching Indians, the helicopter climbed up into the blue.

"That was certainly some adventure we had down there, Vince," Parry remarked, as he set course for Santa Purto. "But it was sure worth while. Our films of the pterodactyls will be shown all over the world. We'll be famous." A sudden thought crossed Parry's mind. He smiled. "And there's one thing we've got to be thankful for."

"And what's that?" asked Vince innocently.

"That you don't appear on the film with the pterodactyls," chuckled Parry. "Viewers might think there are three of the ugly brutes."

Just in time, Parry ducked under the seat-cushion hurled at him by his indignant pal!

JOIN THE RUSH for LION

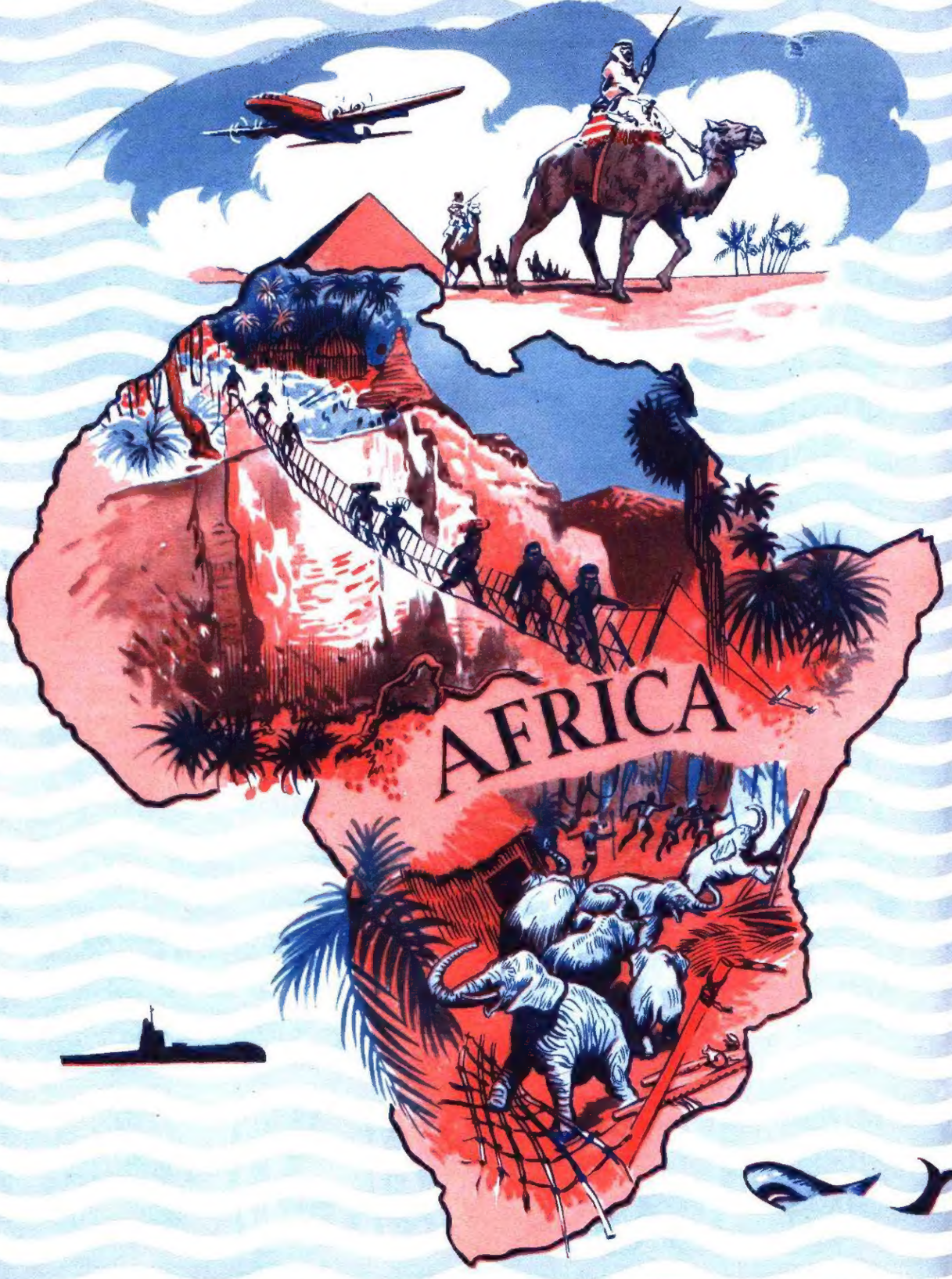
The rush takes place every Monday morning as soon as the newsagent opens his shop. For readers of the King of Picture Story Papers know that they are booked for a wonderful feast of adventure, mystery and excitement. If you don't already buy "Lion," try a copy this week. You'll find that it is packed with smashing features.

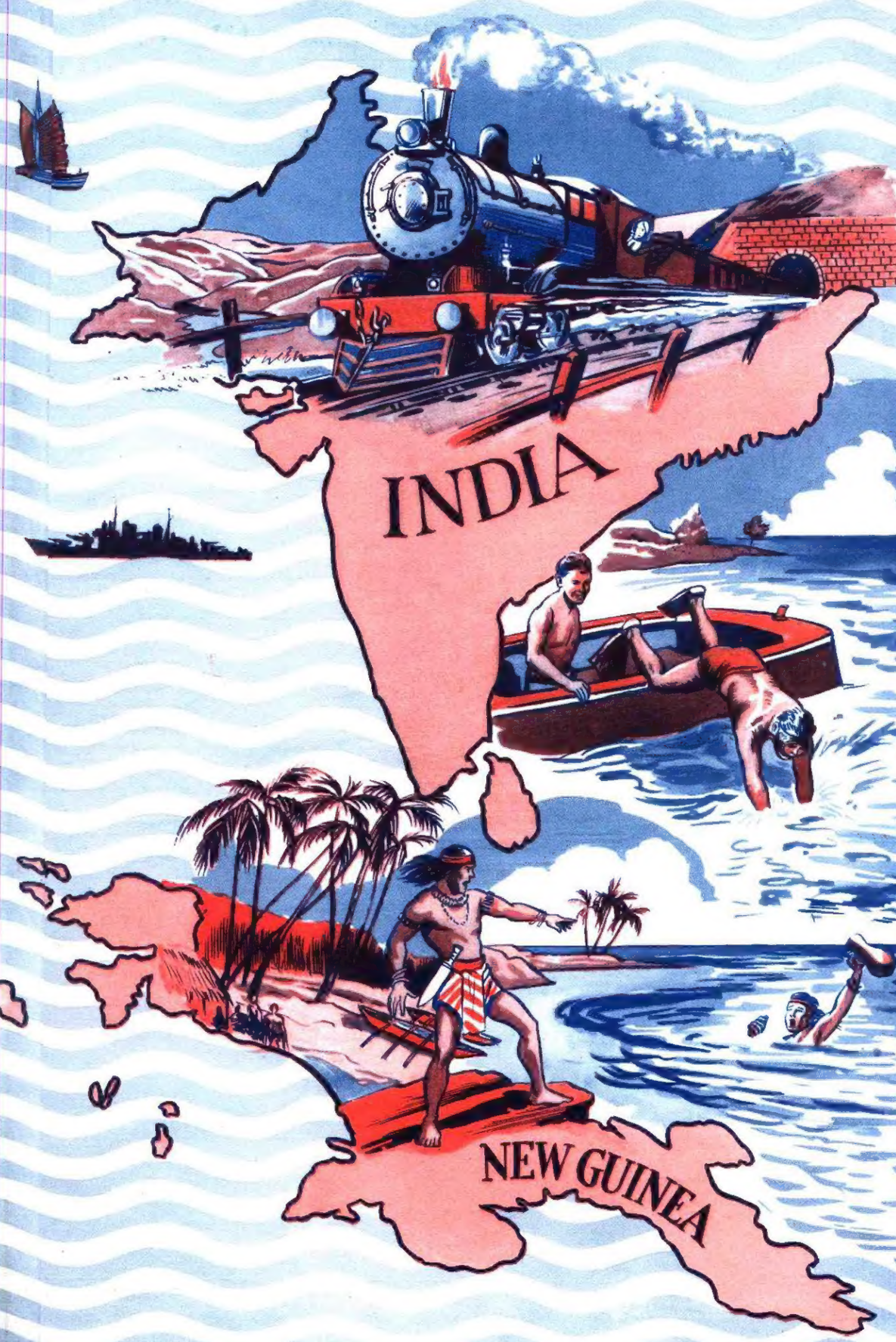
LION

KING OF PICTURE STORY PAPERS

3D.

Printed in England by Messrs. Percy Brothers, Ltd., Manchester, and published by The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, England. Sole agents for Australia and New Zealand: Messrs. Gordon & Gotch, Ltd.; South Africa: Central News Agency, Ltd.; Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland: Messrs. Kingstons, Ltd.


AFRICA


INDIA
NEW GUINEA